



Up from the underground: subway tales.

Page 17



A drama dynasty is born.

Page 12



Xiamen's hidden jewel.

Page 20

Search for missing US climbers continues in west Sichuan

Page 8



Taking the plunge in memory of a famous swimmer

More than 300 hardy winter swimmers gathered to swim the Yangtze on the 113th anniversary of Mao Zedong's birth. The late Chairman famously swam the river himself in 1966.

CFP Photo

Foreign firms win IPR cases

Page 2

Horror at building site: child sexually abused, murdered

Page 2

Drivers deliberately reverse over accident victims

Page 3

International adoption policy not to change

Page 4

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China to unify corporate income tax for domestic, foreign businesses

By Chu Meng

China plans to enact a bill that would eventually unify income tax rates at 25 percent for both domestic and foreign companies. The news comes after years of criticism that the tax policies are unfair to domestic entities. China's top legislature, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), has initiated the lawmaking process this week.

China's current dual income-tax structures have long been the subject of intense debate. Many Chinese economists, government officials and business

leaders have openly criticized the tax policies as being unfair to domestic businesses, while offering advantages to foreign-invested enterprises.

Uneven playing field

Chinese companies currently pay income tax at a nominal rate of 33 percent, while their foreign counterparts, who benefit from tax waivers and incentives, pay an average of 15 percent.

Local companies have forcefully called for the same privileges since China joined the WTO in 2001, but foreign investors counterattack that local competitors are able to obtain preferential loans

and other special treatment.

Stock market reaction

"China's shares rose, driving Shanghai's stock index to a record high of 2500 point this Wednesday, on speculation the government will cut tax rates on domestic companies," said Chen Ru, manager of the Bank of China International Investment Managers.

"Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd. v paced the gain by the biggest companies by market value. It will boost the return on domestic public companies and serve as a driver for long-term earnings growth by leveling the playing field."

But some experts did not agree the stock market's prosperity this week had anything to do with the unified tax rates bill. In fact, many local governments offer various tax incentives to investors, domestic or foreign, such as very low land rent or locally defined tax waivers.

The generous tax incentives have fueled foreign capital inflows. China has been one of the world's top destinations for foreign-invested enterprises, hitting \$53.5 billion in 2003, \$60.6 billion in 2004 and \$60.3 billion in 2006 in terms of the amount actually used.

Foreign firms win IPR cases

By Huang Daohen

A Beijing court on Wednesday ruled on 17 cases involving foreign intellectual property rights. Foreign firms won 13 of the cases.

The highly publicized Viagra finally received a verdict: American pharmaceutical company Pfizer won the patent for Viagra in China, and two Chinese companies were ordered to pay compensation for infringing on the registered trademark.

The Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's court ordered Beijing Health New Concept Pharmacy Co. Ltd. and Guangzhou Viaman Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. to stop sales of blue rhomboid pills similar to Viagra and to pay Pfizer 300,000 yuan (US\$38,363).

Like Pfizer, 13 other foreign enterprises, including 20th Century Fox Film Corporation, Columbia Pictures Industry Company, The Disney Company and Sony Company, won their cases.

At the same time, losing Chinese firms received their due in court. Xuzhou Xiangshi ritual celebration company was ordered to revoke its "lions" mark for infringing on the English Premier League's lion trademark; a vendor in Beijing's Wantong New World Commodity Trading Market was instructed to pay 160,000 yuan for pirating Sony's GT racing game discs.

Sohu, one of the most popular Chinese websites, was ordered to pay 108 million yuan to 20th Century Fox, Columbia Corporation, Universal Studios and Warner Brothers for providing unauthorized movie download service. Sohu allowed unauthorized access to such box office hits as Lord of the Rings, King Arthur and Harry Potter III.

The court handled nearly 70 percent of the city's intellectual property cases, 20 percent of which involve foreign intellectual property rights.



Beijing Chaoyang district's fire brigade has established its first team of rescue dogs and handlers.

Photo by Wang Xiaoxi

Experts predict more tremors in Taiwan

Further earthquakes are likely to jolt southern Taiwan this week, on the heels of two strong tremors that hit the island Tuesday night, experts from the Taiwan meteorological department forecast.

The natural calamity has also disrupted regional telecommunications. Internet access has slowed and international websites, including Yahoo and MSN, are inaccessible.

China Telecom, one of the mainland's biggest telecommunication and broadband service providers, said that at least six of its cables in the sea area 15km south of Taiwan has been cut, affecting links between the mainland and Taiwan, US and Europe. The company said it was working to repair the cables but that the situation may last for a while.

PCCW, Hong Kong's main fixed-line telecom provider, said several undersea cables it partly owned has been damaged, disrupting telecommunication and data services in Taiwan, Korea, Japan and the US. PCCW believes the problems will last several days. "Data transfer is down by half," a PCCW spokeswoman said. (Xinhua)

First comprehensive juvenile court set up in Beijing

By Han Manman

A special court to deal with juvenile delinquency was established Monday in the Beijing Intermediate People's Court to help reduce the city's increasing number of juvenile offenders. It is the first independent judicial system in Beijing for minors.

The court is aiming to handle juvenile criminal, civil and administrative cases involving suspects mainly from 14-18 years old.

"The establishment of the special juvenile court intends to reform and improve the judicial system for the underaged, and further protect the legal rights of juvenile delinquents," court spokesman, Gao Zhihai, said.

Before the juvenile court was set up, said Gao, there was no specific court to deal with all cases involving minors. "Beijing has a special court that handles juvenile crime, but they can't cope with the high volume of cases. However, there's no specific court to deal with the civil and administrative cases, which are dealt with like adult cases."

Chinese society is becoming more and more concerned with the growing number of young offenders. In August, the Supreme People's Court issued a notice that required a total of 18 intermediate people's courts across the country to establish special juvenile courts within the year. Gao said Beijing and Guangzhou were the first to heed the order.

A recent survey from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences discovered that 70 percent of crimes are committed by teenagers and youngsters. Li Jing, a local lawyer, said the establishment of special juvenile courts across the country would be significant for reducing the number of juvenile delinquents and protecting their rights.

New airport waiting lounge to rise in Dongzhimen

By Gan Tian

An airport waiting lounge will be built early next year in the Dongzhimen area, allowing passengers to check in prior to their local and national flights, the East Second Ring Road Construction Office announced this week.

The lounge will be located in a traffic hub northeast of Dongzhimen Gate and the Capital Airport subway line, both still under construction. Travelers can do their usual check-in procedures at this lounge, then get to the Capital airport in 16 minutes via subway. Airport personnel will take care of transporting their luggage. The system will be in operation before the 2008 Olympic Games.

Once completed, Dongzhimen's traffic hub is expected to be the largest in Asia, occupying an area of 15.4 hectares with over 1,200 parking slots, said East Second Ring Road President Li Qiang.

Horror at building site: child sexually abused and murdered

By Jackie Zhang

The body of a four-year-old girl who had been sexually abused prior to her death was found by her brother Monday evening at a building site in Fengtai District. Police have taken a 20-year-old man from Henan Province into custody in connection with the killing, and are reporting that he has confessed.

The girl, Xiong Xiaoyu, lived in Xiajia Hutong in Fengtai District, close to the construction site where her body was found. "Xiaoyu goes out to play every evening after supper, but when hadn't come back by eight Monday evening, I thought some-



Victim Xiong Xiaoyu was only four years old. Xinhua Photo

thing wasn't right, so some friends and I went out to look for her," said brother Xiong Yuliang.

A watchman at a nearby building site told Xiong that he had seen the accused take Xiaoyu into an unfinished building. The man claimed he had in fact taken

Xiaoyu back to her home. Later that night, her brother found Xiaoyu's body lying face down in a room on the fourth floor of the unfinished building. Her body showed evidence of sexual abuse. The girl had been dead for some time when she was examined by medical staff called to the scene.

The accused had a bad reputation at the construction site where he worked. "He always steals building materials from here to sell, and he uses the money for drinking and gambling," said an unnamed workmate. "We all knew that he was a thief, and that he was afraid of women. Sometimes he can't even speak with them."

Drivers deliberately reverse over accident victims?

By Gan Tian

A driver named Peng Yongsheng from Dujiangyan in Sichuan Province has been arrested on suspicion of deliberately killing a three-year-old boy on the afternoon of December 20. Witnesses say Peng first knocked down the boy, who was playing in a doorway, then reversed his car over the prone child.

The boy's aunt said she saw the whole incident from close by. She first saw two men get out of a car that had knocked her nephew down, they were astonished to see the men get back into the car and reverse over the boy, killing him. Peng later claimed he had attempted to save the boy using

reverse gear to avoid hitting him a second time.

An officer from Dujiangyan police who attended the scene said, "This was no ordinary traffic accident, so the case has been referred to the local police station."

Chengdu Evening News reported Wednesday that the three-year-old boy was not struck twice, but witnesses maintain they saw the car roll over the boy a second time after the driver saw the boy on the ground. The parents of the victim insist the driver take full responsibility for their son's death.

Another ten-year-old boy was killed in a separate traffic incident in Sichuan just days after

the death in Dujiangyan. A truck ran into a woman and her son last Saturday afternoon in provincial capital Chengdu, leaving the mother trapped beneath the vehicle and her child stuck under a rear wheel. Again, the driver did not get out of his vehicle, and reversed the truck. Witnesses say the woman and her son were not seriously injured at first, but his decision to reverse the vehicle killed the boy and seriously injured the mother.

One saying alleged current among drivers is that if you hit someone, it is better to kill them outright. One witness to the latter incident, who declined to give his name, explained the thinking,

"You'll pay at most 200,000 yuan including mental anguish and funeral costs if you kill someone in a traffic accident, but if you injure them severely you'll have to take care of them for a lifetime and it'll cost you more." Traffic laws require drivers to pay a maximum of 150,000 yuan compensation if they are found responsible for a death in a road accident.

Lawyer Yue Cheng said a driver's culpability in a traffic incident could often be judged from whether they protected the scene and called the police. The law lays down severe penalties, including prison terms, for a driver who flees the scene of an accident.

Official announcements to be more transparent

By Qiu Jiaoning

A list of names and telephone numbers of spokespersons from State Council departments, provincial and municipal governments, central organizations of the Communist Party of China (CPC) was made public on Thursday.

"It's the first time in China that authorities have provided the public with a list of contacts for governments of provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions," Cai Wu, director of the State Council Information Office, said at a press conference Thursday.

To date, 74 departments under the State Council have put in place a system for making public statements, including designating 91 spokespersons. China's 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions have all introduced this system, appointing 52 spokespersons.

"We required that an adequate number of press conferences should be held and various methods of news release be adopted to meet the needs of media organizations," Cai said. In 2006, the State Council Information Office held 58 press conferences. Departments under the State Council and regional governments held 506 and 757 press conferences respectively.

Regional governments and central government departments are also required to deal with inquiries and interview applications from journalists, release information on breaking news, interpret newly issued regulations and address the concerns of the media and general public.

"The key is a fast response and accuracy, so as to meet journalist's needs," Cai said, "Press conferences should not only provide authoritative information in a timely fashion but also offer background information and in-depth analysis."

Gas well in flames as second capping fails



The well has been burning for more than a week.

Xinhua Photo

By Chen Shasha

Gas leaking from a well in Xuanhan, Sichuan Province, is burning again after a second capping operation failed this Wednesday. Zhang Chongyao from Xuanhan government said local authorities are working with petrochemicals giant Sinopec, who operates the well, to prepare a third attempt to stop the leak, but success is by no means guaranteed.

The leak was first noticed last Thursday, and 12,000 residents living near the well were evacuated. Some have gone to stay with friends or relatives. Where this has not been possible, shelter has been arranged by the local government.

The first attempt to cap the well was made Monday, but failed. The second operation, at 7:30 pm this Wednesday, involved more than 300 workers from Sinopec, who

initially succeeded in extinguishing the burning escaping gas. Fifty minutes later, however, a new leak occurred and ignited and workers were evacuated.

Zhang Chongyao said that the most difficult problem faced is the complicated geology underground at the well. Specialists are now working on a new capping plan, which is expected to be ready for implementation soon.

Hospital staff helmeted after death dispute

By Annie Wei

Staff at private Shanxia Hospital will no longer be wearing military-style helmets to work after the local street committee promised to improve public safety following disturbances outside the clinic in Shenzhen, Guangdong province.

The hospital had been the focus of media attention earlier this week after doctors and nurses began going on their daily rounds kitted out in protective headgear. Security guards at the hospital armed themselves with batons, and even the head of the hospital, Yang Yushan, was wielding one when he took his turn on gate security.

One guard said the security precautions were taken because friends and relatives of a patient who died at the hospital some days ago had been involved in violent disturbances there over the past week. Hospital staff said the death was accidental and senior staff had tried to resolve disputes about care given to the deceased with their company and family, but no amicable resolution had been possible.

Li Zicai, Party secretary with the local street committee said the two sides had refused to accept the outcome of arbitration, which had determined that the hospital would refund 150,000 yuan in medical

fees. The hospital wanted to conduct an autopsy to show cause of death but the dead patient's family would not allow this. Li added he found the decision of hospital staff to go to work wearing military-style protective gear "strange."

Wang Sen, a relative of the deceased, said the family had merely burnt paper 'ghost money' in a traditional mourning rite. Wang denied even verbal threats to hospital staff had been made.

Police said the family had refused to take away their relative's body for burial, but there had been no violent incidents that they were aware of.

Overseas bases no place to hide for drug runners

By He Jianwei

In 2006, 36 Chinese drug traffickers were taken into custody outside the border of China, Liu Yuejin, deputy director of the Ministry of Public Security's Bureau of Narcotics Control, said at a press conference Tuesday on China's campaign against drug abuse and trafficking.

The Ministry of Public Security listed 85 Chinese citizens engaged in drug trafficking from bases outside of China during the years 2005 and 2006. In all, 50 of those named have been caught, with 14 detained in the past year.

The drug traffickers and heads of trafficking groups mostly operate from countries or regions neighboring China, a long-standing trend in Chinese drug trafficking, according to Liu.

Police solved 36,400 cases related to drug trafficking between January and November this year, detaining 45,100 suspects and seizing 4.79 tons of heroin, 1.52 tons of opium, 4.9 tons of methamphetamine, 329,000 ecstasy pills and 1.5 tons of ketamine, Liu said at the press conference.

Brief news

Easier Olympic access for Taiwanese journalists

Journalists from Taiwan will be able to arrange multiple entry visas, have easier access to news resources and the right to hire mainland citizens to assist them in their reporting in the run-up to and during the 2008 Olympic Games, thanks to new regulations issued Wednesday by the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council.

Gifts totaling 240 million returned by medics

Medical staff across the country have this year voluntarily turned in a total of 240 million yuan (US\$30 million) collected as gift money or kickbacks, in a nationwide crackdown on illegal practices in the health system, according to the campaigns' leading office under the State Council.

Government receives 100,000 complaints

More than 100,000 complaints were lodged against government departments in the past year, including abuse of power and inefficiency, a Ministry of Supervision spokesperson said.

Farm incomes rise

On average, the country's 900 million farmers are 133 yuan (US\$17) per capita better off this year in the wake of the government scrapping a total of 120 billion yuan (US\$15 billion) in agricultural tax, according to Uyunqing, vice chairwoman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Millions of new mobile phone users

China gained over 61 million new mobile phone users in the first 11 months of this year, bringing the total number of users to some 455 million, the Ministry of Information Industry stated this week.

(By Jiang Xubo)

International adoption policy not to change



By Huang Daohen

Fat, single 50-somethings may not find adoption so easy in China from now on.

After the new guidelines were released by US-based adoption agencies earlier this month, overseas media have reported that China is tightening restrictions for foreign adoption, seeking to rule out adoptions by unmarried, gay, elderly or unhealthy people.

The state-run China Center of Adoption Affairs (CCAA), Wednesday, said that China's Law of Adoption and the Registration Regulation on Foreign Adoption has not changed, and they will continue to deal with foreign adoptions according to that law.

The guidelines

As many as 2,000 foreign adoption applications arrive in China monthly, according to CCAA. Prospective adopters now have to wait 14 to 15 months, on average, from the time of their applications until they receive an initial match.

To keep the numbers down and shorten waiting times, the CCAA has long planned to launch a priority guideline to select who is most suitable to adopt Chinese orphans. The new guideline was released and discussed with representatives from foreign cooperating adoption



French couples fill out the last of the adoption paperwork in a government-owned orphanage in Guangxi last month.

CFP Photos

agencies at a routine meeting held by CCAA, December 8 in Beijing. More than 100 licensed adoption agencies in 16 countries have been informed of the revisions later after the meeting.

The CCAA has not confirmed the details of the guidelines yet, but adoption agencies are reporting that changes and much tighter rules will apply starting May next year. The shift, which focuses mainly on a stable marriage, good financial records, sound physical and mental health, appeared likely to have a broad impact on growing numbers

of foreigners who travel to China to adopt babies, particularly unmarried couples.

CCAA response

The guidelines are in response to an enormous increase in applications by foreigners, which has far exceeded the number of available babies, said Xing Kaimin, director of the Adopter's Eligibility Review Department at CCAA. As the only institution authorized to deal with foreign adoptions, the CCAA has received a soaring number of applications to adopt Chinese children in recent years.

The new guidelines, Xing said, were initially designed to ensure that Chinese infants end up in healthy, traditional families when people from the United States, Europe and elsewhere adopt them. "We want to pick the most qualified so our children can grow up in even better conditions," Xing said. "It does not mean we are prejudiced against less qualified applicants."

In addition, as more and more Chinese are interested in adopting, "We also have to consider Chinese families who want to adopt as top priority," Xing said. Such couples are not allowed to give birth to a second child of their own but may adopt to give their child a brother or sister.

Adoption agencies

The change in regulations for adoptions by foreigners do not come into effect until May, but many have already begun to exert an influence.

The *New York Times* reported, December 20, that US adoption agencies are telling would-be adopters they will likely be approved, if they have already started the adoption process, and may still send in all their paperwork by May 1. As for new applications, some agencies are already rejecting applicants who do not meet the new criteria.

Oasis, the national advice service for overseas adoption in Britain, said it was understandable Beijing would want to tighten the rules, but regrets how single parents that excluded.

"The rules will help China to reduce waiting times for couples, who often queue for more than a year to adopt a child," said Tucci Sutfin, executive director of New Beginnings Family and Children's Services, an international adoption agency in New York. "We will have to be very careful about new prospects. That will be sad, but necessary," she said.

Ruth Redman and her husband, a British couple from Bristol, adopted three girls from China several years ago, who are aged ten at now, seven and three. "I am thankful for my girls," Redman said. "I feel very bad for the people who will not be able to adopt now."

Throughout the last decade, China has been the number one source of children adopted by countries. More than 50,000 Chinese children are reported to have been adopted by foreigners in the past 10 years, of which US families make up four in five. About 8,000 Chinese children were adopted by US families last year, up from 5,000 in 2001.

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Cards are usually sold in packs of 10 costing RMB70-85 (about US\$10). The money goes a long way: Just RMB1 provides a year's supply of Vitamin A supplements for a Chinese child, boosting her immune system and reducing her chances of childhood mortality. If you're in Beijing, you can come to see the colourful cards on display at our showroom (from now to Dec. 24, 2006, open all week days, 8:30-17:30), conveniently located in central Beijing at 12 Sanlitun Road in Chaoyang District.

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A Long Way from Home

13-year-old Xue Lian and her 11-year-old sister Xue Yuan spent six months and many miles away from home to beg, sell flowers and collect empty bottles and cans in the city, all for a meagre RMB200.

The sisters were forced to drop out of the school and leave their rural home in Anhui when their father fell ill with tuberculosis. "We were so afraid we would not be able to find our way back home," remembers Xue Lian. Finally, local police picked up the girls and took them to a children's association center in Hefei, a UNICEF-supported program that helps kids like Xue Lian and Xue Yuan find their way back home.

UNICEF continues to support projects such as this and works with the Chinese government to return street children to safe environment and give them access to basic services, such as education.

Note: the children's names have been changed to protect their identity.



Volunteers' phone numbers:

13661174500	134 01035161	13701093614	13693082466	01084792041
13953398998	13581881269	13811503009	13953398998	13910067280
13301218393	13901381945	1391014 8806	13701018926	13910512114
13718813188	13701206401	13810421599	13501000678	13910975292
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Income gap grows despite pledges

By Geoff Dyer

Shanghai (Financial Times) – China's widening income gap is approaching Latin American levels, according to a report by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), a state think-tank.

The development flies in the face of two years of efforts by China's leaders to make addressing the gap between rich and poor a priority. Hu Jintao, China's president, has pledged to promote "social equality." Although the government has abolished an agricultural tax and pledged to expand the social security network in both rural and urban areas, it is under considerable pressure to announce more ambitious policies.

The think-tank report is the latest by governmental or international groups to conclude that economic inequality is rising rapidly in China, despite the continued growth in the economy and the millions of people who have been lifted out of poverty.

In its annual report on social development in China, the CASS academics also warned rising medical costs were becoming

an ever-greater problem and were pushing some back into poverty.

Based on a survey of 7,140 households, the CASS report concluded China's Gini coefficient – a measure of income distribution where zero means perfect equality and 1 is maximum inequality – reached 0.496 this year.

In comparison, income inequality figures are 0.33 in India, 0.41 in the US and 0.54 in Brazil, where rapid industrialization and urbanization have also led to high levels of social inequality.

There is some disagreement among economists about the implications for China of rising inequality. Some see it as the inevitable result of rapid development in a continent-sized country where the coastal eastern regions are expanding much faster than more isolated western areas and where millions of poor farmers are moving to cities. Some studies suggest inequality in cities has not risen sharply. But academics also warn that such discrepancies in wealth could lead to greater social tensions and undermine support for further economic reforms.

Comment from report editor

By Jiang Xubo

Many factors have contributed to the increasingly widening income gap. First, globalization has divided the labor pool and contributed to the gap. The income of high-end workers, including managers and new-and-high-tech workers, have increased at a much faster pace, which is increasingly closer to international levels of income growth. At the same time, income for semi-skilled workers like migrant farmer-turned workers, where labor supply exceeds demand in China, has increased at a very slow pace.

Second, the way people generate wealth has also changed. New industries like IT have made it possible for people to make a fortune overnight, earnings which might take several generations' effort for people working in the manufacturing sector.

The gap keeps widening. The authorities should take the initiative to address this issue and keep it under control. The most important thing is to set up fair, just and more acceptable arrangements for income distribution.

—Li Peilin, editor-in-chief of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences' annual report on social development

Beijing to spend billions on public transport

BEIJING (Reuters) – Beijing will spend US\$9 billion to ensure public transport can cope with the strain of the 2008 Olympic Games and beyond, officials said on Wednesday.

The city has already spent 11.67 billion yuan this year on improving and expanding roads, subways and other facilities, said Liu Xiaoming, Beijing Government Transportation Committee spokesman.

"We are trying to make using public transportation fashionable for Beijing citizens," Liu told a news conference.

The city's clogged roads have become a major concern less than two years before the Games open.

In Beijing – where about 1,000 new vehicles take to the road a day – the average speed during peak hours on the city's arterial roads had dropped by half in the last decade, the World Bank said in a report earlier this year.

"This is a problem which will take a long time to solve," Liu said.

He added that total investment in Beijing's public transport would reach 71.5 billion yuan by 2010. He did not provide a breakdown.

The government will also give discounts of up to 80 percent for residents for bus tickets to encourage people to leave their cars at home, Liu said.



Public transportation is a necessity to many people.

CFP Photo

Karaoke parlors to pay royalties



A karaoke lover belting it out.

CFP Photo

BEIJING (AFP) – China's popular karaoke parlors will have to begin paying royalties on the music videos they use beginning on January 1.

The China Audio and Video Association announced the decision over the weekend despite a chorus of complaints from karaoke lounge operators across the country, Xinhua news agency reported.

According to rates set by the National Copyright Administration, karaoke parlors in bigger cities will be charged up to 12 yuan (US\$1.5) per private room per day.

Lower rates may be set for less developed regions, Wang Huapeng, an official with the China Audio-Video Management Collective, was quoted as saying.

The move has provoked an outcry from karaoke businesses across China, with some arguing that the rates are too high and that not all rooms are in use every day.

Xinhua reported there are around 100,000 karaoke parlors in China, earning ten billion yuan (US\$1.25 billion) in annual revenue.

They could generate 8 million yuan (US\$1 million) in royalties for copyright holders each year if the payments are enforced successfully.

Expert comment

By Jiang Xubo

It's right that royalties are to be collected. Market reward is an appropriate way to measure a musician's value, and it is a good way to encourage creative artists.

It is also OK for a government department to collect the money on behalf of musicians. But the government has been a little hasty in implementing this scheme. The single nationwide rate is a bit too crude an instrument to be broadly acceptable. It would be better if the government carried out the plan step by step after thorough research on how musical works are used in different situations. A lower rate would have made the plan more palatable to karaoke parlor operators.

A large sum of money will likely be collected from the trade every year. The government should make clear and proper arrangements to decide who will share this income and how much they should take.

—Zhang Zihui, School of Journalism and Communication, Renmin University

Dire warnings from China's first climate change report

BEIJING (AFP) – Temperatures in China will rise significantly in coming decades and water shortages will worsen, local media has reported, citing the government's first national assessment of global climate change.

"Greenhouse gases released due to human activity are leading to ever more serious problems in terms of climate change," the Ministry of Science and Technology said in a statement.

"Global climate change has an impact on the nation's ability to develop further," said the ministry, one of 12 government departments that prepared the report.

In just over a decade, global warming will start to be felt in the world's most populous country, and it will get warmer yet over the next two or three generations.

Compared with 2000, the average temperatures will increase by between 1.3 and 2.1 degrees Celsius by 2020, the China News Service reported, citing the assessment.

By the middle of the century, the annual average temperature in China will rise by as much as 3.3 degrees Celsius (more than five degrees Fahrenheit), and by 2100 it could soar by as much as six degrees Celsius, according to the news service.

"We're in a period of rapid economic growth, and energy consumption will increase as a result," Liu Hongbin, a Beijing-based expert at the National Climate Center, told AFP. "As a result, China will continue to emit a rather large amount of greenhouse gases."

The report predicted that precipitation will also increase in the coming decades, rising up to 17 percent by the turn of the next century, according to the news service.

China Internet users fake identity numbers

BEIJING (UPI) – Chinese officials say Internet users in the country are using false identity card numbers to mask their identities while accessing Web sites and games.

An official from the National Citizen Identity Information Center said software that generates fake identity information can be downloaded off the Internet for use in registering online game or Web site accounts, Xinhua reported Tuesday.

"Chinese game companies and most of the Web sites that require personal information on registration do not check anything. Their 'real name registration systems' are simply no match for the identity card number generators," the official said.

"Even children can now access games and Web sites that contain unsuitable content using the identity card number generator," he said.

Huang Chenqing, secretary-general of the Internet Society of China, said: "A lot of Internet users just don't want to register under their real names for fear that they cannot do and say what they want on the 'Net as freely as before. What's more, some Internet users don't trust game companies and Web sites with their personal information."

Nine foreign banks approved for local incorporation

Beijing, December 25 (AFP) – China's banking regulator approved the local incorporation of nine foreign banks, giving them easier access to millions of retail clients.

The nine foreign banks are Standard Chartered, Bank of East Asia, HSBC, Hang Seng Bank, Mizuho Corporate Bank, Bank of Tokyo Mitsubishi UFJ, Singapore's DBS Bank, Citibank and ABN AMRO.

The nine locally incorporated units are all registered in Shanghai, China's financial hub.

New regulations that took effect on December 11 allow foreign banks to conduct local currency business with Chinese citizens in line with

China's commitments to the World Trade Organization.

Under the new regulations, China will treat foreign banks the same as local lenders, but only if they incorporate locally.

Foreign banks that agree to register as local banks can provide unlimited deposit services and may issue credit cards.

Failure to incorporate locally means the banks can only deal with the largest of clients, as the minimum deposit they can take is one million yuan (US\$128,000).

However, local incorporation also entails disadvantages as it means the banks must eventually

maintain a cap on total outstanding loans in the local currency equivalent to 75 percent of total deposits.

The nine banks accounted for

34 percent of all foreign bank branches, 55 percent of total assets held by foreign banks and 58 percent of profits achieved by foreign banks in China.

Six more are lining up

Beijing, December 28 (AFP) – Societe Generale and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corp are among a further six foreign banks that have applied for local incorporation, state media said.

The six filed their applications just days after the first

batch of nine foreign banks received permission to incorporate locally.

In China, where the population has reached more than 1.3 billion, it can take a few hours to make a deposit at a local bank during peak business hours, due to inefficient service.

Mesa Air sets up regional carrier

Beijing, December 26 (AFP) – China's Shenzhen Airlines and Mesa Air Group of the United States have created the first Sino-US airline joint venture, with plans to launch a regional carrier serving domestic China routes by late 2007.

The new carrier, which is yet to be named, expects to have 20 regional jets with a 50-seat capacity in service prior to the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008, growing to more than 100 planes of various capacities within five years.

China currently has just 70 regional jets in operation, flying for seven different carriers, the statement said. The venture would serve as a link between second-tier cities and the main domestic trunk lines.

Mesa will initially provide technical capability, including pilot, maintenance and operations support and training, as well as the sourcing of aircraft, the companies said.

Singapore buys land for development

Singapore, December 28 (Reuters) – Yanlord Land Group and the Government of Singapore Investment Corp said they had bought a prime residential and commercial site in Nanjing for S\$473 million (US\$308 million).

The site is 306,126.5 square meters and the developers bought it through a public government land auction.

"We intend to develop this site into a thriving international community of residents. We are optimistic about the sustainable demand of mid- to high-end residential development in China," said Zhong Sheng Jian, Yanlord's chief executive officer.

"We look forward to more such successes with our strategic partners as we continue to invest in China's high-growth cities," said Seek Ngee Huat, president of GIC's real estate arm.

Singapore has cooperated with the Chinese government to develop the Suzhou Industrial Zone over the past decade.

SOEs support Hang Seng Index



The Hang Seng Index reached a record high of 19725.91 on December 27, thanks to the increasing listings of enterprises, particularly state-owned-enterprises, from the mainland.

The mainland has become a major player in the Hong Kong stock market, both in terms of the number of listed companies, market values of their shares and capital collected.

Xinhua Photo

Citigroup may buy local airline

Shanghai/Hong Kong, December 28 (Reuters) – Citigroup Inc and other potential investors are in talks to buy stakes in China's privately owned Spring Airlines, two sources familiar with the matter said on Thursday.

"We have discussed share placement deals with several

potential investors, including Citigroup," a source at the airline told Reuters.

"We want to sell no more than 20 percent to one or several investors. Talks with Citigroup have passed the initial stage," the source added.

The Shanghai-based, no-frills

carrier has obtained initial approval from the Chinese government to buy 10 A320 passenger jets, the source said.

It hopes to raise 3 billion yuan (US\$384 million) to help fund the purchase via a share placement and an initial public offer, which is envisioned for 2009.

M&M to expand logistics business

Beijing, December 28 (FOX 11 Green Bay) – Swiss logistics company Miltzer & Munch International Holding AG (M&M) increased its turnover by 20 percent in the Chinese market to US\$35 million in 2006, following an average annual growth of about 23 per cent over the past four years.

The rapid growth was powered by business development in Tianjin. With a registered capital of US\$1.2 million, the company

established a 75-25 joint venture with local player Tianbao Logistics in 1994 to extend to China its forwarding business, which has a presence in Europe, Russia, the Middle East and East Asia.

In October, the firm teamed up again with its local partner to launch a new logistics center for its Asia-Pacific region. The center is the group's biggest logistics project in East Asia, where it will focus on China.

"Development of this new facil-

ity could enable us to provide tailor-made one-stop services to our customers," Dieter Buchinger, general manager of M&M Tianbao, said.

That, combined with the land purchase fund, will bring the firm's total investment up to US\$10 million.

Its location in the bonded area of the city's free trade zone could boost its attractiveness to clients hoping to enjoy significant customs and tax reductions.

Best Buy opens first store

Shanghai, December 28 (AP) – The consumer electronics retailer Best Buy opened its first outlet in China yesterday, after teaming up with a local partner.

Best Buy, together with the Jiangsu Five Star Appliance Co, opened the store in Shanghai's busy Xujiahui shopping district.

The 80,000-square-foot store is Best Buy's biggest anywhere and its first outside North America.

Oakwood to open apartments

Beijing, December 26 (chinahospitalitynews.com) – Oakwood Asia Pacific announced plans for serviced apartments in Beijing, Tianjin, Hangzhou and Shanghai.

First to open in 2007 will be Oakwood Apartments Beijing, located in Chaoyang's 'Third Embassy Area' and a neighbor to office buildings such as Silver Tower, Millennium Tower and the Fortune Building.

Toyota to produce Yaris locally

Tokyo, December 28 (Reuters) – Toyota Motor Corp said it will start building the Yaris subcompact, the smallest car in its product line-up, at a joint venture in Guangzhou in mid-2008.

The Yaris, called Vitz in Japan, will be the second model to be produced at the 200,000 units-a-year plant in southern China, which began building the Camry sedan this May.

Shougang enters Beijing Hyundai

Shanghai, December 26 (Reuters) – Beijing Shougang said it would take a 23.62 percent stake in Beijing Automotive Investment Holdings Co Ltd, the Chinese partner of Beijing Hyundai for US\$136 million.

Beijing Automotive, which has a 50-50 venture in Beijing with the South Korean automaker, makes the hot-selling Accent and Elantra sedans in the world's second largest automobile market.

Rural bank mulls foreign investors

Beijing, December 27 (Dow Jones) – China's Beijing Rural Commercial Bank is to attract strategic foreign investors and will likely sell a stake to such investors in two to three years.

Some Chinese banks, including Bank of China and Industrial & Commercial Bank of China, sold stakes to strategic foreign investors before their share listings in efforts to improve banking practices.

Beijing airport to sell A-shares

Shanghai, December 28 (Bloomberg) – Beijing Capital International Airport said it will sell as much as four billion yuan, (US\$512 million), of A-shares in Shanghai to fund a terminal.

A third terminal and new runway will more than double Beijing Airport's annual listed capacity to 78 million passengers before the 2008 Olympic Games.

What happens when the forces of global capitalism and cultural imperialism come robed in red and wearing a white beard? Ten doctorate students from China's elite universities came together last week to release a letter calling for a boycott of Christmas and all the rest of non-native cultural trends.

In a statement carried by many Chinese websites, the PhDs lamented the loss of Chinese traditions and morals, amid what they said was a widening invasion of Western popular culture.

The letter also offers a long list of complaints about the holiday: people don't really know what it means, it's an encroachment on traditional Chinese holidays by western 'soft-power', why should China roll over when even Europe is resisting 'American-style' commercialized Christmas.

Citing the increasing popularity of the holiday among the younger generation, protest organizer Wang Dashan argues in the letter that Christmas is a form of "soft power" that if left unchecked will dilute traditional Chinese culture. The letter states outright "we uphold religious tolerance and freedom of religion, and we have no intent to exclude [Christianity]." Wang, on the other hand, believes that rejecting Christianity is essential for a renaissance of Confucianism.

It's not all complaints, however – the PhD protesters put forth some suggestions, most of which echo recent calls for a revival of Confucianism and traditional learning. They also urged government departments to consider regulating Christmas activities in public venues and in the media.

Granite studio

The Confucian war on Christmas



More Chinese believe the popularity of Western-style festivals has its reasons.

CFP Photos

Comments:

I have to say, both sides shouldn't get too excited, and don't need to worry. Whether a cultural tradition lives or dies will not be decided by a demand or even an official order.

– Huang Si

When we, as foreigners, dip into Chinese culture – flying kites, giving hongbao to friends' kids, making dumplings at Spring Festival, etc. – I think we always retain an awareness that we're doing so in a limited way, out of curiosity

or deference, rather than surrendering ourselves to it wholesale, and abandoning our own cultural heritage in the process.

– PM

Is 'Western Culture' really so bad? If you say us Asians cannot be 'Westernized', then why have 'Westernized' countries and regions like Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong gotten along so well? Put it that way, one can imagine that anti-Xmas views in China don't represent the majority, urban and educated at least.

– Chris

If the point of Christmas is to build stronger relationships with the people around you and have a bit of fun doing so, I don't see why the Chinese people celebrating Christmas should necessarily be seen as a bad thing. Isn't that kind like saying Westerners shouldn't use chopsticks, practice taichi, or delight in wearing t-shirts displaying Chinese characters?

– Nikeroo

Too late, cats out of Santa's bag and Christmas will be forever a holiday in China. One reason is the economic surge provided by

those buying Christmas presents and cards. I think the protesters' petition only fueled the interest in this Jesus birthday holiday.

– David Temple

I got into work at CCTV-9 on Christmas Eve, my heart sank when I remembered I'd be facing a stream of the same old 'China is embracing Christmas' and 'Santas on roller coasters' stories that we dust off every year like old decorations that should have been given to a charity shop ages ago.

– Bingfeng



The representatives received awards last Friday.

Xinhua Photo

The Chinese government this month announced the names of China's 100 Outstanding Mothers. Last Friday some of them came to Beijing with officials.

Wang Zhaoguo, vice president of the National People's Congress (NPC), praised the women for their spirit of selfless maternal love, outstanding moral character, and the self-esteem, self-confidence and self-reliance that are the characters of a 'proper modern woman'.

The purpose of the awards was to hold these mothers up as inspirations and exemplars for Chinese women. Wang added building a harmonious society begins at home, and one essential element is the training and education of children.

Women's virtue has long featured in official and popular moral discourse in China, with women often, in the words of one scholar,

'vessels of the symbolic'. Almost all the didactic works for women in the past were written by men, representing distinctly male concerns, and often in response to behavior that flew in the face of what fathers, husbands, sons and officials considered acceptable.

In pre-modern China, women and girls had few rights and little freedom. Confucius, thousands of years ago, barely mentions women at all except to say, "By nature, women and servants are much alike. If you treat them well, they take advantage of you and if you ignore them, they resent you."

The image of the woman in late Imperial China owes much to the intellectuals of the May Fourth era who presented a vision of the powerless, illiterate, crippled Chinese woman as a symbol of China's backwardness and weakness.

Global voice online

Outstanding mothers: feminine virtue and the state in China

Comments:

Mothers are always great! The Chinese government, so far as I know, has always rewarded exemplary behavior by women. The government used these awards to set a model of female behavior and as a way to promote social order.

– Glenn

It's a little disappointing that President Wang only mentioned qualities in the domestic space such as an elegant bearing and early childhood education. It seems the old divisions of inner or outer continue to figure strongly in Chinese (male) ideas of gender, women continue to be symbols for social stability.

– CLB

There's nothing wrong with these awards. I'm sure the women who received them are

deserving recognition. Let's just assume this in the spirit of the season. Interestingly, of the 10 women who met with Wang Zhaoguo this past week, one was Uighur, one was Hui, and one was Mongol. Does the Federation choose recipients of their award with an eye to inclusiveness, or is this a coincidence?

– Homer

Women's freedom is a relative concept. My argument is not that Chinese women enjoyed an exceptional amount of freedom in the 18th century, but rather by the standards of the time, elite women in China and in Europe probably had similar spaces in which to pursue their own activities.

– Bailey Squier

I agree that it is impossible to generalize for all women in

China and for all times. One of the limitations of the Outstanding Mothers awards is that they are looking at super-elite women. Does some of their research look at ordinary women in the countryside? There are questions as to how representative these awards are.

– ShadowWalker

Excellent post, as usual, and much in line with what I have been thinking of writing myself. I realize they are talking purely about elite women, and that these in fact are in a league of their own already, but I also wonder how far these literate elite women have distorted our view of womanhood in late imperial China, by knowing that their writings could and would be read by a majority of men.

– Lao Lu

Search for missing US climbers continues in west Sichuan



Charlie Fowler (left) and Christine Boskoff (right) have been missing for some weeks.

By Jiang Xubo

The search for two American mountaineers, missing since early last month, continues. Rescuers have narrowed their search zone to Genie Mountain in China's southwestern Sichuan province.

A team of around 10 volunteer rescuers, most of them American and Chinese friends of the climbers, along with some 200 local climbing enthusiasts, are searching the 6,200-meter-high Genie Mountain, now snow-covered and without access to mobile or land-line phone services.

"We warned searchers not to go above areas higher than 4,000 meters, otherwise they'd be in danger. Their skills and equipment don't qualify them to conduct an alpine rescue," Lin Li, secretary-general of the Sichuan Mountaineering Association, said.

It may take the rescuers at least three to four days to search the most-likely areas. Plans for further search and rescue remain undecided until the Americans' families and the association's American counterparts arrive, Lin said.

The US Consulate General in

Chengdu (USCGC), which has promised a reward of 30,000 yuan for traces of the climbers, refused to reveal detailed information about the rescue arrangements.

The search and rescue focused on Genie Mountain when the Americans' luggage turned up last Saturday in the care of a local driver in Litang county, some 80km away from the mountain.

Rescuers found the luggage at the driver's home while conducting a door-to-door search last weekend. The driver claimed the climbers hired him and left the

luggage at his home on November 11 to go mountain climbing. The two said they would be back on November 24.

Christine Boskoff, 39, a top female climber, and Charlie Fowler, 52, a climber and guide, came to Sichuan last month, but without the registration China requires for foreign climbers.

The USCGC reported the Americans missing on December 14, after the climbers had failed to return to the US on December 4. It turned to the Sichuan Mountaineering Association for help soon after.

Drug bust snares 24 expats

By Chu Meng

Beijing Police arrested 24 foreign drug suspects this year – mostly drug sellers in Sanlitun Bar Street and the Houhai Bar area. Police said they would further tighten drug control of expat amusement venues in town next year.

The narcotics control department of Beijing Public Bureau said Monday, the city arrested 4,065 drug-related suspects in the first 11 months of this year, including 24 expats. The busts seized 249kg of various substances.

"Sanlitun Bar Street has the most expat-related crimes; the highest expat population density; the most illegal settlers and the

most drug dealing," Fu Zhenghua, deputy director of the Beijing Narcotics Control Commission, said. "Many of the arrested expats were four types: African, jobless legal settlers, unemployed Americans living in Beijing with hand-outs from their home country, Russian prostitutes and some from South-eastern Asia, like Pakistan and India."

Wei Min, director of Entry and Exit Administration Center for Beijing Public Security Bureau, Chaoyang Branch, said, "More than two thirds of those arrested or controlled were African drug dealers. They were wandering Yaxiu market and 3.3 shopping center by day, and selling drugs to expats or foreign tourists inside or around

bars and residential buildings by night. More and more Chinese have become their customers. During the 11th World Junior Championships, we arrested the biggest group of African suspects."

"Drugs are completely banned in Beijing amusement venues. Thirty-eight out of about 1,000 venues were found involved in drug-related crimes, among which 11 were suspended, and three others shut down," Fu said.

"Beijing plans to use sniffer dogs for drug detection in public venues, such as buses, railway stations, shopping malls and theaters. The city aims to have no drugs in public venues by the end of next year," he said.

Coma stuntman wakes

By Chen Shasha

Hollywood stuntman Oldrich Svarousky, who was badly injured during a botched stunt in Shanghai, December 16, awoke from his nine-day-long coma this Monday. He was able to speak with his teammates for few minutes.

However, Yu Fei, spokesman for Shanghai No 10 People's Hospital, said Svarousky still isn't out of danger. "His brain stem was badly injured, and he may easily fall back into a coma," Yu said. After only a few minutes talking, Svarousky fainted again, Yu said.

Yu said his recovery has a long way to go, and it is as yet unclear when Svarousky can leave Shanghai.

Ancient treasures of India on display

By Han Manman

As the grand finale of the successful India-China Friendship Year, an exhibition titled 'Treasures of ancient India: exhibition of Indian civilization' was opened by Ambika Soni, Indian minister for tourism and culture, Tuesday, at the National Museum in Beijing.

The exhibition is part of an attempt to introduce the wealth of India's rich cultural traditions and heritage to Chinese audiences. It will showcase a wide-ranging selection of 100 antiquities that represent Hindu, Buddhist and Jain art, and that date from between 3rd century BC to 18th century AD.

This is the largest-scale exhibition



Stone sculptures of Hanuman

CFP Photo

of Indian antiquities ever organized in China. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) director, Amarendra Nath, said not only was it China's largest, but also

one of the largest ever organized by the ASI outside India, and that this is the first time most pieces have ever been displayed abroad.

There was considerable inter-

est among Chinese visitors regarding stone sculptures of Hanuman. One of China's most celebrated mythological figures, the Monkey King, a character in Wu Cheng'en's 16th century novel, Journey to the West, is based on the seventh century Buddhist monk Xuan Zang's 16-year travels in India. Scholars believe the Monkey King is partly based on Hanuman. Some even speculate the Monkey King and Hanuman are one and the same, but Nath said there is no conclusive evidence.

The exhibit will be open for two months before leaving to tour Chongqing, Zhengzhou and Guangzhou.

Greenpeace holds a cappella concert

By Annie Wei

Beijing University Hall was bustling last night with an amazing a cappella performance by student groups from the US, Hong Kong and Beijing University.

Their selected songs were well known by both local and expat audience members, with Cantonese, traditional Chinese and British pop songs.

The event was organized by Greenpeace and aimed to draw attention to the toxic output of electronic products and introduce a cappella to China.

A cappella, originally a method of song performance used in European churches, is seeing a revival in popularity. Members of the group harmonize with each other to create music without instrumental accompaniment.

Jamie Choi, a Greenpeace campaigner, said a cappella suited their agenda to persuade people to use 'green' electronics. Also, she believes it caters to young people who have a passion for music and the environment. The day before the event, around 2,000 tickets were sold. A non-profit concert, each ticket cost only 20 yuan. According to Greenpeace, ticket revenue would only be used to cover staging costs. It was also a main reason why Greenpeace chose Beijing University Hall instead of commercial theaters downtown.

The audience was amazed by the music, and especially by the excellent performance of four music groups: Hayden Singers, Beida 7, New Youth and Penny Loafers. Beida 7 and New Youth are student groups from Beijing University. In Hayden Singers are from Hong Kong and the Penny Loafers are an American a cappella group who have a nearly 21 years performing history.

Thirteen members of Penny Loafers, from the University of Pennsylvania, paid for the trip to join the event on their own.

Andy Dalzell the group's music director, said a cappella is popular in many American universities. There are more than 20 a cappella groups in his university, and each is unique. Penny Loafer are known for their rock 'n roll style, and took the Best of Cappella prize in 1999.

Dianna He, born in Xinjiang and a Penny Loafers member, left for the US when she was four-year-old. "I read about the event on some Internet message board, and then I contacted Jamie of Greenpeace. Later, she invited us to the event. It was great honor," she said.

Members of Hayden Singers also paid for their trip to this event themselves. Feng Guodong, their teacher, also came with his wife for the special event. "I really like this kind of music and think it has a chance to spread a cappella to other regions," he said.

Hayden Singers is one of the best cappella groups in Hong Kong. During the holiday season, members have to get their work done, and prepare for other events.

UNICEF raises US\$1 million in China in 2006

By Gan Tian

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) China raised nearly US\$ 1 million for children in China this year, largely from corporations, UNICEF Beijing Communication Officer Charles Rycroft said Thursday.

Normally, UNICEF has an annual global income of about US\$1.3 billion, of which more than one third is contributed

from public donations and the private sector.

"UNICEF raises funds in China essentially through corporate alliances, because we don't raise funds from individuals unsolicited. The 'Checkout for Children' program with Starwood Hotels - a global partner of UNICEF - raised nearly a quarter of all funds from corporations this last year," Rycroft said.

"Just as there is an imbalance

between economic and social development in China, there is also a lack of awareness of how promotion of children's rights and investment in children is essential to overall national development," UNICEF's National Plan of Action for Children and Girls' Initiative states.

This year, UNICEF used the funds raised for a series of activities and programs related to children's health, nutrition,

HIV/AIDS, education, development, protection, community services, gender equality, children's development environment and sanitation.

Rycroft said all donations to UNICEF, including those from governments, are voluntary, which is why UNICEF needs to keep visible in today's world. Fund raising not only raises money, but also awareness of key issues negatively affecting children.

Awards for Russian Year in China

By Jiang Xubo

The Russian Embassy awards 22 members of the Chinese Organizing Committee for Russian Year in China, recognizing their contributions to the campaign this week.

Sergey Razov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to China, presented the awards, including Russian president prize and friendship medals, on behalf of the Russian government.

The ceremony marked the end of the successful Russian Year in China, and announced the upcoming Chinese Year in Russia, which will be held next year.

The two countries first announced the Russian Year plans last July, seeking to strengthen mutual understanding and cooperation in culture, economy and military.

Tang Jiaxuan, state counselor and vice president of the Chinese Organizing Committee for Russian Year in China and Chinese Year in Russia, attended the awarding ceremony.

Chinese art managers learn from UK

By Jackie Zhang

The China-UK Visual Arts Management Workshop, a joint project of the British Council, Visiting Arts, a registered charity based in London, and the Central Academy of Fine Arts, will invite four experts from the UK to give Chinese art managers a five-day training session next spring.

The organizers are inviting art managers from all over China to participate in the training session. Two past participants shared their experiences with *Beijing Today*.

Ni Bing, DJ, music and event promoter, participated in the

workshop in November 2003. What impressed him most was how foreign art managers try to connect art with commerce. "A teacher gave us a class on art and business. Chinese people have never dealt well with the relationship between art and business. I think it's a problem with how we think."

"I work in musical event management. I learned from the training that we needed to interact with people. Music festivals are supposed to be entertainment. It is more important to help people connect than to focus on the stage performance."

Yu Rongjun, a drama writer and manager of marketing department of Shanghai Dramatic Arts Center, participated in the workshop in 2004. "Our training was divided into two parts, theory classes and practice. I was a theater manager, so I went to the West Yorkshire Playhouse in Leeds. I interviewed all the staff in the theater and learned a lot about their managing experiences. In China, we always focus on planning the play and forget about services for the audience," he said.

Yu said it impressed him a lot when teachers told them

to consider how the audience got information about the plays, where audience could go after watching the plays and whether they would return to the theater in the future.

The training is from March 12 - 16 at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing and costs 1,000 yuan per person for room and board. The British Council will pay all other fees.

The workshop will recruit, at most, 25 persons. The final names will be released on the websites of the British Council and the Central Academy of Fine Arts before Spring Festival.



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Consignment baby shop comes to town

By Annie Wei

For expectant expat parents in Beijing, it is not easy finding baby products or even maternity clothes. Based on her own experience as a mom-to-be, Karen Patterson came up with the idea of opening Nu2Yu, a baby shop catering to foreigners.

When Karen learned she was pregnant in 2004, she immediately wanted to shop for baby items. However, she quickly discovered there seemed to be only two options for a woman with her mission: pricey stuff from Pacific Plaza and Lufthansa Shopping Mall or locally made ones which didn't suit her taste. Take a travel system for example: a decent-looking one costs from 6,000-8,000 yuan, which is much more expensive than ones you will find abroad. Finally, five months pregnant, Patterson decided to fly back to Canada with two big empty suitcases to go baby-stuff shopping.

From you to me, from me to you

All parents know a newborn child can bring the family unimaginable happiness – but also things that go out of use after only a few months. Things need not go to waste, Patterson later realized. In Beijing's expat circles, the solution seemed to be obvious: there was one group of parents looking for good-quality low-priced items, while there was another group who no longer had use for such things.

Canadian youth to experience local life

By Huang Daohen

This year, nine young Canadians from across Canada have been selected to live and work together with nine Chinese fellows in Chaoyang district for three months, beginning this week.

This is the fourth Sino-Canada Youth Exchange Program, a long-term project of the International Youth Training jointly run by the Canadian city of Squamish and Beijing's Chaoyang District.

Accompanied by a project supervisor, Ben Crompton, the Canadians will be partnered with nine young Chinese individuals for project collaboration and cultural exchange. Together, these 18 participants will learn about the local community, its social and economic resources, as well as traditions and cultural norms.

In preparation for their arrival, the organizer, Chaoyang Communist Youth League Committee, looked for host families and volunteer work placements. Each host family and work location will have two exchange participants: one from Canada and one from China.

Since the program was established in 2003, over a hundred young people from Canada and other countries have participated, and hundreds of families and communities have welcomed them.



Goods in Nu2Yu

Photo by Tian Yufeng

Patterson clarified that her shop was not a "second-hand store" that accepted all baby products; rather one that bought and sold things, which were "nearly new." Thus, the store's rejection rate is at 40 percent.

"You do not want your daughter in a broken high-chair," said Barbara Chen, who used to co-manage the shop. "We only accept things in perfect condition." While there are products brought in on consignment, there are also those hunted

down by the store.

Valuable experience

Collecting items and marketing the shop are currently Nu2Yu's two biggest challenges. However, since the business was established in March this year, through word-of-mouth, customers in and out of Beijing have learned of it. Just last week, Patterson mailed an item to a customer in Chengdu after exchanging information by email.

Patterson and Chen both found their parenting experience indis-

pensable to setting up shop. When it comes to color markers, for example, Patterson will tell mothers which brand is best suited to children of various age groups. Younger children might chew the markers, so parents have to make sure they're not made from toxic materials. Plus, pregnant women would especially ask a lot of questions, so the storeowners need to fully know their stuff.

For more information, please go to nu2yubabyshop.com.

Renaissance masters disappoint Beijingers

By Chu Meng

An Italian Renaissance Comes to Beijing exhibition opened to the public at the Museum of the Imperial City on Monday, after an initial 20-day exclusive viewing.

The exhibit was eagerly anticipated, however, quite a few visitors expressed disappointment in the show. They said they were misled by the advertisement, expecting to see some of the greatest works of art by Renaissance masters da Vinci, Raphael and Michelangelo. A number of people believe the organizers were bluffing.

Luigi Bellini, curator of the Italian Bellini Gallery that owns all the exhibits on display, told *Beijing Today* he felt the people's feelings, but the museum had put on a great show. "All 49 pieces were jointly selected by Ital-



Luigi Bellini, curator of the Italian Bellini Gallery

ian and Chinese experts on the basis of each painting's significance in displaying the true spirit of the Renaissance humanism. In other words, it is the painting, not the painter, which preserves the essence of the Renaissance, one of the most glorious moments in human history."

To those who complained that he did not bring the magnum opus of the three masters to China, Bellini joked, "the really great pieces of the masters are not portable, since they were mostly painted on the roofs and walls of ancient buildings."

In addition, the less famous works are not necessarily of lesser value, he added, citing da Vinci's *Cavalier*. Bellini explained that the horse in this sketch is unique and unearthly. It has an African horse's front

and a European horse's rear, but looks natural thanks to da Vinci's rich knowledge of anatomy. The cavalier's sword is also one-of-a-kind because da Vinci himself designed it. This sketch, small as it is, tells a story of a versatile da Vinci, knowledgeable not only in the arts but also the sciences. The creativity illustrated in this painting is an important part of the Renaissance's spirit of enlightenment, the very theme of this exhibition.

Bellini was not at all surprised to hear some viewers were disappointed that many pieces on display were by lesser known artists. "Just like those great Chinese ink painters not widely recognized outside China, these Italian artists may not be known by Chinese people, yet they are big names back in Italy."

Photo By Wang Xiaoxi

Events

Wine Night at YPHH (Young Professionals' Happy Hour)

Where: Bloo, Park Plaza Hotel, No 97 Jinbao Street, Dongcheng

When: January 9, 8:30-10:30pm

Cost: 100 yuan for YPHH cardholders; 150 yuan for non-members

Tel: 8522 1999

For more information: yphh.com/cities/bj-wn.htm

Temple of Heaven and taichi class

Tour the Temple of Heaven and practice taichi with Chinese Culture Club (CCC) experts.

Where: Meet outside the Temple of Heaven's east gate (main entrance opposite Hongqiao Pearl Market). The CCC guide will be there with a flag.

When: January 3, 9:30am-12pm

Cost: 160 yuan (includes entrance fee, taichi and guide)

Tel: 6432 9341 (Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm); 6432 1041 (week-day mornings and evenings; on weekends, rerouted to a mobile phone)

Adoption information meetings

The Chinese Daughters Foundation will provide an informal information meeting for prospective adoptive parents.

The foundation will give an overview of the expat adoption process and costs, explain how to start the documentation process and answer questions. Singles and couples welcome.

Where: Tim's Texas BBQ (formerly John Bull Pub), No 44 Guanghua Lu, Chaoyang

When: January 11, 7:30 pm

Tel: 8403 4979

New Year's Day buffet brunch at the Great Wall

Where: Schoolhouse Canteen (map may be downloaded from theschoolhouseatmutianyu.com/SchoolhouseMappage.html)

When: January 1, 10:00am-2:30pm

Cost: 280 yuan for adults; 140 yuan for children 4-12; younger than 4 get in free

Tel: 6162 6506

Check the menu at theschoolhouseatmutianyu.com

Tie Chinese knots

Learn to make auspicious knots through the Chinese Culture Club (CCC). Create knots, butterfly or lily shoes and other patterns, and hang them around your neck or from your handbag.

Where: Chinese Culture Club, Kent Center, No 29 Anjialou, Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang

When: January 10, 10am-12pm

Cost: 60 yuan

Tel: 6432 9341 (Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm); 6432 1041 (week-day mornings and evenings; on weekends, rerouted to a mobile phone)

Lecture on theory and practice of Chinese language teaching

Where: Hutong School, No 8 Shungsi hutong, Dashiqiao Hutong, Jiugulou Dajie, Xicheng

When: January 6, 9am-4pm

Cost: 100 yuan

Tel: 6400 0905

(By He Jianwei)

Celebrate New Year in the kingdom of snow and ice

By Qiu Jiaoning

As the 23rd China Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival fast approaches, travel communities like the Chinese Culture Club, Cycle China and West China are planning New Year trips to Harbin for expats living in Beijing. All tours and transfers will be accompanied by English-speaking tour guides.

Harbin, called Little Moscow, is the capital of Heilongjiang Province, which sits next to Russia. The Harbin Snow Festival, held annually from January to February, is one of the world's four major snow festivals. The festival will feature ice lanterns, ice carvings and snow sculptures, turning the city into a gleaming crystal.

West China

The West China travel community is planning a three-day ski tour in Harbin; the timetables are to be made in consultation with the guest. The cost will vary according to group size. For a group of 7-9, for example, the rate is 4,280 yuan per person.

Participants may also enjoy a snow land trek. From Harbin, there will be a three-hour drive to Dongsheng, a small town where the hike will begin. Total duration of the trek is around 4-5 hours, going up and



Harbin's ice festival is popular in winter. Photo by Zhu Xiaosong

down hills. The white landscape and China's northeastern villages provide a breathtaking view.

The area is recognized for having a seven-month-long snow season, with snow piling up to as much as two meters deep. Here you will find Shuangfeng Ski Land, neighboring the better-known Yabuli ski resort. Shuangfeng is the less touristy of the two, but will pro-

vide ski lovers with a good run. The resort provides skis for those who don't have their own gear.

For reservations or inquiries, call 135 6168 2703 or visit the site westchina.net.cn.

Chinese Culture Club and Cycle China

The Chinese Culture Club is organizing a three-day tour of Harbin

from December 30 to January 1 at 2,800 yuan. A stroll along the Songhua River and a winter swimming show on the frozen river are part of the attractions. Visitors will also enjoy the Snow Sculpture Festival and Ice Lantern in Sun Island Park.

For history buffs, the Germ Warfare Experimental Base shouldn't be missed. You'll hear pieces of unknown history from World War II in the Far East and get to see its original site with bombed walls, underground offices and experimental cells. At a leisurely pace, explore Central Avenue featuring Russian shops, Russian-style architecture and the St Sofia Orthodox Church. For reservations or inquiries, call 6432 9341 or 6432 1041.

Cycle China will arrange a similar tour. For reservations and inquiries, call 139 1188 6524 or email reserve@cyclechina.com.

Tip: What to wear

Despite Harbin's notoriously cold winter where temperature gets to as low as 20-30 degrees below zero, the trip won't be as cold with the proper clothing – a down jacket, wool scarf or thick mask, fur gloves and boots.

ASK Beijing Today

Are there mobile phones with an English-Chinese dictionary for sale in Beijing?

Yes, there are lots of mobile phones with an English-Chinese dictionary. Examples include the Motorola A732, NEC N3105 and TCL 9188. For more information on models and prices, visit your nearest retailer.

Where can I buy foreign-language books in Beijing?

The two most popular bookstores in Beijing for foreign-language books are Wangfujing Foreign Language Bookstore (No 218 Wangfujing Street) and Bookworm Café (Building 4, Nan Sanlitun Road).

Why do some Chinese men grow their pinkie nails long?

Beijing Today did not find any clear explanation for this phenomenon. One member of our staff, however, said that her grandfather had a very long pinkie nail, so she called up her family to ask about it. She was told it was for practical reasons – to scratch various body parts.

I know China has a family planning policy, but I see people who have more than one child. Why is that?

The policy provides exemptions, and the one-child rule did not apply everywhere. Some of the more common cases are the following: the couple's first child is handicapped, one of the partners is a member of a Chinese minority group, or a person is remarried, even though he or she already has a child in the previous marriage. Individuals who are only children may also have two kids once they have a family of their own.

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

(By Wei Ying)

HSK gets face-lift in 2007

By Han Manman

The Chinese Proficiency Test for non-native speakers, better known as the HSK (Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi), will be modified in 2007. Practical use of the language will be given more weight in the test, the HSK center of Beijing Language and Culture University (BLCU) announced in a news conference last week.

The new HSK will put more emphasis on the individual's

overall language ability and communication skills, such as the ability to speak Chinese under specific situations, instead of just testing listening, reading and grammar skills. There will be an additional section on oral and writing ability, while there will be fewer questions for the listening and reading sections.

The scoring system, currently at 11 levels, will be simplified to three: beginners (HSK Basic),

elementary to intermediate (HSK Elementary-Intermediate) and advanced (HSK Advanced).

"The reformed HSK will be launched in 2007 with an oral test and essay writing section added," Sun Dejin, director of the BLCU's HSK Center, said. The HSK center will provide examinees with information on the new test, Sun added. "The reform is based on research and surveys, including studies of linguistics

and psychology, as well as communication with foreign experts."

In April 2007, both the old and new HSK tests will be conducted and examinees can choose to take one or both. The old HSK test will be phased out in 2008.

The HSK is a national standardized test to assess the Chinese language proficiency of non-native speakers including foreigners and students from China's ethnic minorities.

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BEIJING TODAY

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English



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Hundreds of audience members signed up for Xi Xiao Tang's club

Photos by Tian Yufeng



Scenes from Curse of the Pyramids



By Chen Shasha

"We hope to make Xi Xiao Tang as famous in China as Broadway is in the US." Guan Haoyue, the drama workshop's founder, said on a windy afternoon in a small fast food restaurant beside the Haidian Cultural Center.

"Our team often sits here, talking aimlessly, then suddenly, ideas just pop into our heads," Guan said. "If we have a plate of beef in black pepper with rice in front of us, our next drama might just be named after it."

The group's name means "leisure and happy drama" in Chinese, words chosen by Guan. Their plays focus on love

found in the metropolis, targeting an audience of office workers and university students. "We hope our drama will amuse people, not just educate them," Guan said.

The workshop was established in August 2005 by a group of young people dreaming of staging original performances. Unlike other troupes, whose dreams remain dreams, Xi Xiao Tang has now built up a name for itself through "drama chain stores" in Beijing, Shanghai and Hangzhou. The group just signed a one-year contract with the Haidian Cultural Center and SOHO, with plans to perform at both venues around 30 nights in 2007.

Drama chain stores

Performing arts



Xi Xiao Tang drama entrepreneurs

Chain store model

Xi Xiao Tang's business model is that of a chain store. It has signed contracts for a whole year's performances with experimental theaters in various cities. Apart from Mondays and days needed to change the set, they do as many as 200 shows per theater per year. Every time a new script comes out, one person is picked to direct the play, which is then staged by a local cast in five of their "chain stores" in Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Tianjin.

When a drama is presented outside Beijing, Guan signs contracts with local media groups, film colleges and PR companies, which help him find local cast and promote the show.

The business model was employed to slowly spread Xi Xiao Tang's name and to save on transportation and hotel fees, a huge financial burden for most young drama groups.

The production cost of each play is about 300,000 yuan, including theater rental and actors' pay, Zhangcheng Xiaoyong, the workshop's spokesperson said. Fortunately, Zhang said they always get an attendance of over 80 percent capacity, earning as much as 20,000 yuan every night. "Actually, our plays usually don't make a profit in the first round of performances, but we recover during the second round."

Apparently, it is the audiences and media's good comments that draw more people to their performances. Because of this, they've been putting more attention on building their brand name, instead of making money. In theaters with a longer drama tradition, the basic ticket price is 100 yuan. Newer venues, however, offer discounts.

Since its establishment, Xi Xiao Tang has put on nine kinds of plays, seven of them having been performed for several seasons. Each drama is performed an average of 30-40 times, and after each performance, the group conducts audience surveys, asking viewers such questions as their concerns in daily life. The input helps Guan decide which performances to continue and which to kill.

Apart from ideas from the audience, the workshop's scripts are born out of Guan's brainstorming with his team. "The drama's title and script are the secret of our success," Zhang whispered.

Xi Xiao Tang's rising fame seems to make traditional drama groups a bit edgy. According to producer Li Dong of the National Theatre Company of China, which presents theatrical masterpieces, the low cost dramas made by Xi Xiao Tang create disarray in the market. "Take the analogy of making pills, for example. While we professional artists carefully do research, their fake pills saturate the market."

Guan Haoyue is calm in the face of criticism. "We're not aiming to create masterpieces as much as industrializing drama; a bit similar to what fast food has done. Present-day audiences love our dramas, and that's enough."

In 2007, 12 of the workshop's plays are slated to be shown in five Chinese cities. In addition, they also plan to collaborate with some restaurants near Beijing theaters, which will offer discounts to people holding Xi Xiao Tang's membership cards. Next July, the first "amateur performance season" will be launched to allow more drama buffs to get involved.



Curse of the Pyramids performance

The

Most of Xi Xiao Tang's plays use popular words or phrases like 'Haven't Made Up My Mind' of the new generation. They never take the initiative to never pay money, take responsibility to meet, fall in love, both of them 'have'. They chose to wait for this line, "I do know how can I know what people were moved to parallelisms with their dramas,



The young man met his lover of 3500 years ago in *Curse of the Pyramids*

for the modern times

Xi Xiao Tang brand

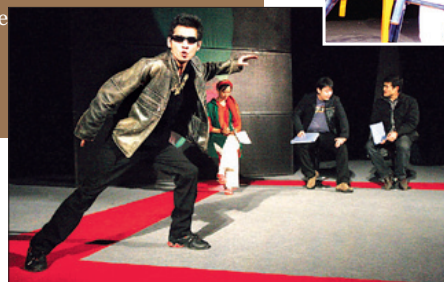
Xi Xiao Tang's dramas originate from modern trends. Take their first drama *I Haven't Made Up My Mind Yet*. It's an illustration characterized by "five nevers": never initiate, never refuse straight out, never make a promise and never break it. In the play, two young people meet but then lose each other, because they can't make up their minds yet. One is for another lover, expressed in the words "I don't know what I currently want, but I know what I'll want in the future." Many people are attracted by the drama, because they see their life. However, they are not always about

modern life. An example is their new play, *Curse of the Pyramids*, which was named after Zhang Yimou's film *Curse of the Golden Flower*. The pyramid story is set in ancient Egypt and tells the story of a princess who fell in love with a servant. The objection from the princess's mother led to the young woman's death and she became a mummy. Three thousand years later, her servant-lover, reborn as an archaeology student, came across a pyramid containing the princess's mummy. What followed were several unexpected miracles.

"The story is so old and I don't expect much from it," a member of the audience said before the show started. The person even said he would leave an hour later. However, the play's humorous lines eventually

made him stay until the end of the three-hour play.

After the performance, more than 140 viewers registered to join Xi Xiao Tang's audience club, which offers ticket discounts for the group's future shows. "We will continue to support Xi Xiao Tang," Chen Xuan, who came with his wife and son said. He had never heard of Xi Xiao Tang before that evening, but came because a friend gave him tickets as a Christmas gift. "I think the play was amazing and creatively done, and it talks of philosophy in an understandable manner. Our child can get some innovative ideas from it, an important thing for kids living in the 21st century."



Scenes from *I Haven't Made Up My Mind Yet*
Photos provided by Xi Xiao Tang



performed on Christmas Eve

Photos by Tian Yufeng

Workshop members

Xi Xiantang has 40 staff members in Beijing and Shanghai, many of whom are handling two or three different roles at the same time. They don't earn much, but are committed because of their passion for drama.

Guan Haoyue, shareholder and one of the directors

"I majored in refrigeration, and have worked in different fields, including real estate and carpet sewing. I helped set up Xi Xiao Tang because I think there has to be a performance that deviates from main trends, yet also brings in money. Many experimental theaters have already been abandoned, a pity for drama lovers."

Zhangcheng Xiaoyong, actor and media contactor

"I was a member of an army performing group and found little opportunity to return to the stage after I retired

from the military. Even though Xi Xiao Tang's vision attracted me, I didn't plan on joining at first. A year after Guan Haoyue talked to me, I eventually cast in my lot, and have now quit all other performing groups. Xi Xiao Tang has a lot of potential and Guan Haoyue's quite a creative man. His ideas often come out of the blue and are funny and unbelievable. I've never met such a man, which doubly makes me believe in Xi Xiao Tang's bright future."

Liu Nini, actress

"I joined Xi Xiao Tang on June 6, 2006, a day I will never forget. After I graduated from the Central Academy of Drama, I stayed at home for a year. But when Xi Xiao Tang came into my life, I became motivated and filled with energy."

Blue Shoes and Happiness

By Alexander McCall Smith

240pp, \$14.93 (Amazon.com)

Blue Shoes and Happiness is the seventh installment in Alexander McCall Smith's best-selling *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series, bringing back heroine Mma Precious Ramotswe, assistant Grace Makutsi and the other distinctive characters in their Botswanan community. This time around, the lady detectives brush up against blackmail, theft, superstitious fears, medical malpractice and a columnist that seems to be doing more harm than good. At the same time, Precious confronts her weakness for beautiful shoes, her being a feminist and the desire to shed pounds off her "traditionally built" figure – until she comes to a better acceptance of herself: "Do I really wanna change the way I am?" Aided by healthy servings of cake and endless cups of tea, Precious continues to try and crack the practical and philosophical mysteries of her world.

What has made this series a success?

One of the best things about Alexander McCall Smith's entertaining *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series is that these aren't really traditional detective stories at all. One must read between the lines to see that the amusing tales delve deeper than solving simple mysteries and crimes. Each book provides an enchanting glimpse into the life and times of Botswana and the series really serves as a clever study of human nature.

– Sarah Chaudhary,
Amazon.com reviewer

What themes does McCall Smith explore in *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*?

Set in a land well off the beaten path, he manages to strip life to its essence, to highlight the universal search for happiness. To be content with one's life is not the message most often encountered in fiction and it is refreshing to find the themes not only dealt with, but masterfully so in this series ... The author focuses on how his characters deal with their success – they find satisfaction with what they have rather than with what lies just out of reach. If that

is, indeed, the Botswanan way, it must be a wonderful place. The story reminds us that evil remains to be confronted, that we are often blind to our flaws, that virtue is its own reward and that though a well-deserved acquisition can be the source of much pleasure, true happiness and contentment come from peace of mind and a conscience free of guilt.

– J. Brian Watkins,
Amazon.com reviewer

Will fans of traditional detective novels like this book?

Clearly, if you're looking for fast-paced action by he-man private investigators or cunning "wimmin" who outthink the most devious wrongdoer, this is not the book for you. However, if you'd like to follow a perceptive and perspicacious pair of personable people, Mma Ramotswe and her "assistant detective" Mma Grace Makutsi, you should give this book a serious look.

– Stephen A. Haines,
Amazon.com reviewer

Exactly what kind of detective is Precious Ramotswe?

Precious solves the mysteries of life with unshowy wisdom and dogged charm. Her adventures are gentle. In her appraising gaze, the world of Botswana possesses a muted physical beauty and innocent grace which, taken together, seem to mitigate all of the wrongs and hurts and slights that its human inhabitants, in moments of sudden weakness, thoughtless selfishness or nastiness, sometimes visit upon each other. She knows the depths of human foibles, yet never succumbs to cynical judgments. Nor does she shirk her moral duty to counter evil with the redemptive power of truth. If this suggests that she is ponderous, introspective or too philosophical, then it misleads. Her world of detection is always in motion, even when stasis seems to brace her in the grip of her latest cases – rocking, during leisure time on a Saturday afternoon on the shaded veranda of the home she shares with her husband, Mr JLB Matekoni. Even there the bee-like motion of murmurous worrying over her caseload affects the grave internal movements of her brain to produce significant results.

– Tom Adair, *Scotland on Sunday*

Why do avid readers hail this as the best book, so far, in the series?

The story has animal tales (one involving a cobra), several mysteries to resolve, challenges in Mma Makutsi's engagement ... and many reflections on the true nature of happiness by Precious Ramotswe. In particular, the story does a fine job of contrasting the older ways in Botswana with newer, selfish ways ... The best part of this book was that it developed the characters more than most books in the series have done. The author uses both dialogue and action well to help us appreciate who these characters are.

– Donald Mitchell,
Amazon.com reviewer

A major part of the book's appeal seems to be its idyllic African setting.

Tales of Precious's singular sleuthing take place in a village in Botswana, and contain gentle fables of everyday African life. The author is keen to show the "small, everyday Botswana that the tourist doesn't get to see," and the wealth of detail in the novels is the rich fruit of his own background: McCall Smith grew up in Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, before moving to Scotland to study. As well as working on the criminal law of Botswana, he helped set up the country's law faculty at university.

– Caroline Frost, *BBC home*

Some readers find the novel's pace too slow.

If the plot moves a little slowly and the mysteries seem somewhat odd, it's because the novel focuses on human relations (this time we come to know Mma Makutsi intimately) and daily life at the agency.

– Bookmarks Magazine

Is there a downside to being the seventh book in a long series?

Traditional values (hard work, craftsmanship) are stressed, and yet somehow in the midst of this seventh book, I started to see some irony (in the repetition of these values) in that the author seems to be getting a little lazy, repeating himself – almost as if he copied and pasted passages from earlier books.

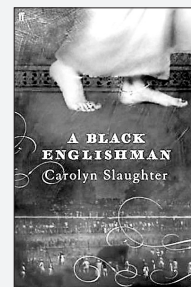
– K. Solomon,
Amazon.com reviewer

(By Tiffany Tan)



Local shelf

A Black Englishman



By Carolyn Slaughter

Farrar, Straus and Giroux,
352pp, 120 yuan

Isabel, a young woman fleeing from the ravages of the Great War, throws herself headlong into a passionate and dangerous liaison with Sam, an Indian doctor and Oxford graduate – but their devotion to one another takes them across the length and breadth of India and to the brink of disaster. This powerful and erotic love story combines the urgent and contemporary themes of colonial exploitation, and compellingly explores the many forms of partition – secular and religious – that infect and endanger the modern world.

A Pale View of Hills

By Kazuo Ishiguro

Vintage, 192pp, 105 yuan

In his best-known book, *The Remains of the Day*, Kazuo Ishiguro advances the butler's story, not by giving, but by withholding both information and emotion. This novel is about a woman who lived in Nagasaki after the bomb was dropped. We don't hear the explosion. We don't even hear the names of the dead. And yet it's very clear that something perfectly wretched has gone on. And it's still going on. Roe Kendall dramatizes so well that, after a while, I forgot to wonder why a woman of English breed was telling the story.

Available:

Beijing Bookworm

Where: Building 4, Nan Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang

Tel: 6586 9507

Comfort Me with Apples: More Adventures at the Table

By Ruth Reichl

Random House Trade Paperbacks, 320pp, 116 yuan

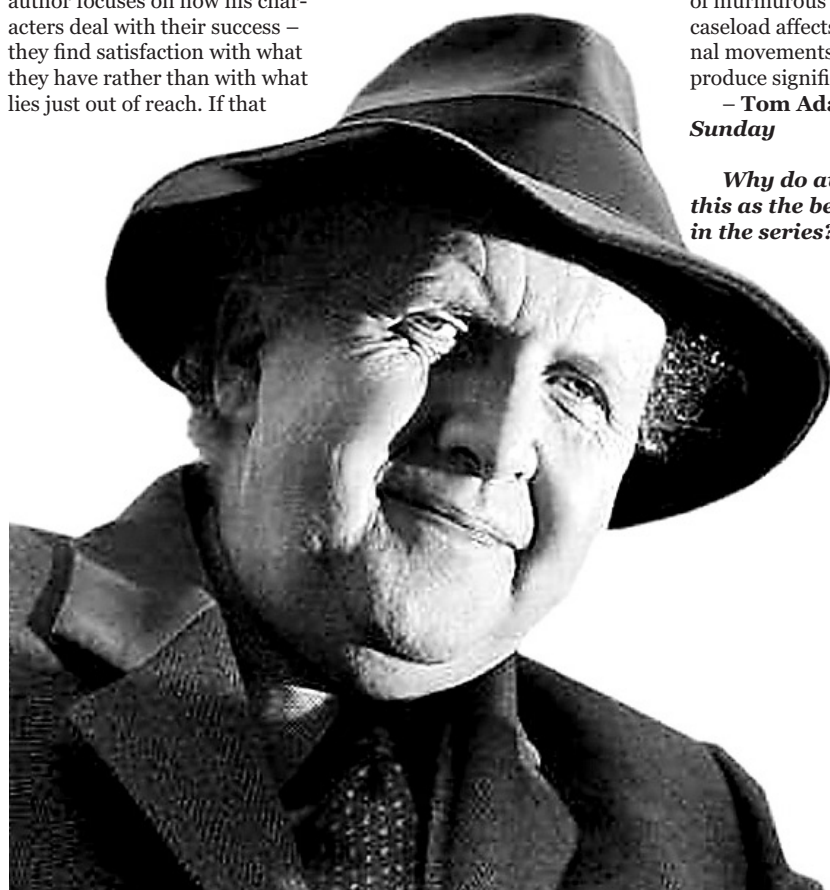
The story begins when Reichl, living in a 70s Berkeley commune, gets her first real job as a restaurant reviewer. Despite the incredulity of her in-the-movement roommates, Reichl persists, traveling widely to polish her palate. In the doing she meets food luminaries such as Wolfgang Puck, MFK Fisher and Alice Waters, among others. Her trip to China, which includes clandestine dealings with a former chef, is particularly well handled.

Available:

Foreign Languages Bookstore

Where: 235 Wangfujing Dajie
Tel: 6512 6903

(By Han Manman)



Want to mark the New Year with a family dinner? *Beijing Today* checks out a courtyard restaurant, a vegetarian place and a non-traditional tea house, so you can ring in the New Year with a full stomach – and a grin.

Ring in the New Year with a dinner bell

Family tradition and home-cooked meals



Family-style fermented nuts and vegetables are unique in Xu Yuan.

By Chu Meng

Xu Yuan Homestyle Restaurant is a small courtyard house, the residence of the family chef of an official who moved from Guangdong to Beijing in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). The eighth generation of the family inherited the courtyard, and their chef ancestor's cooking skills, so they put up the restaurant. It's a place for a New Year's Eve family dinner and also for stories about ancient Beijing.

The restaurant walls are painted dark red, like that of the Forbidden City.

The dishes served up at this little eatery are different from any cuisine you are likely to taste, combining a number of well-loved culinary delights. The food has a home-cooked taste but is professionally prepared and presented.

Many dishes are the chef's own creation. Appetizers include turnip slices with sweet sauce, chicken feet, corn grain salad and vegetarian abalone slices made from *moyu* or plant root powder.

One dish not to miss is the Fried Scallop Cubes with Sliced Asparagus, Celery and Carrot. The *Hai Wang Shi Zi Tou* is a pork meatball served in soup with two crabs. Sea cucumber, shrimp and water chestnut are used to add flavor to the soup. The deep-fried shrimp balls, served with slices of golden potato is sweet and sour on the inside and crisp on the outside.

The grilled lamb ribs are seasoned with honey and sweet-scented osmanthus, giving the meat a pleasantly rich taste. The lamb is cooked to perfection though slightly fat. The steamed weever fish is quite tender, although the skin has a slightly fishy smell.

Xu Yuan Homestyle Restaurant

Where: No 18 Xilouxiang Hutong, Xicheng (southwest corner of the Di'anmen and Ping'an Dajie intersection)

Open: 10am-11pm

Tel: 6404 4330

Cost: 150 yuan per person

Photo provided by Xu Yuan Homestyle Restaurant



Every dish in Cao Mu Jian is fully satisfying.

Photos provided by Cao Mu Jian

Dare to defy the norm

By Chu Meng

Green Tea House's signature dishes are tea-infused creations that have been termed neo-classical Chinese, yet are in fact wholly innovative. The 15,000 square meters of white dining area is home to furniture and decor that is minimalist and industrial, yet chic and elegant. Green Tea House gives you a choice to defy tradition on such a traditional celebration as New Year's Eve.

It's a truly contemporary space, one that has remained surprisingly true to the rules of traditional Chinese aesthetics. This creative fusion is further enhanced by the use of sensual natural elements such as silk, velvet and wood against the stark white backdrop, all coming together in a breathtakingly impressive dining environment.

Art is the soul of Green Tea House, as shown by the rare claim

that the restaurant employs as many musicians as it does chefs. Partially visible from the main dining area, an ever-changing exhibition space of artists from China and abroad showcases Chinese-inspired sculptures and paintings.

The unique Green Tea House menu is a series of exceptional dishes that combine tea, traditional northern Chinese recipes and non-Chinese ingredients, all set off with a novel artistic element, such as plates formed from palm leaves, glass or marble. The House is without a doubt one of Asia's finest, where every meal can really be a work of art.

Green Tea House

Where: No 6 Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang

Open: 11:30am-3pm, 6pm-12pm

Tel: 6552 8310; 6552 8311; 136

0113 7132 for reservations

Cost: 400 yuan per person



Cao Mu Jian has some amazing fake meat dishes.

Healthy start to the New Year

By Chu Meng

Cao Mu Jian lacks an English name and an English menu, but this teahouse and vegetarian restaurant does have some amazing mock meat dishes and a Zen-like atmosphere, which makes it a worthwhile place for sampling new food and engaging in a long chat with family on New Year's Eve.

The large Chinese-style dining hall is note-worthy. It has a creek designed to flow through part of the restaurant, with goldfish swimming inside. The food and tableware are both elaborately prepared and presented. The menu is filled with many tempting choices; nutritious ingredients are turned into dishes that imitate meat. If you have been diligently working out to stay fit and do not want a big feast, Cao Mu Jian is an ideal choice.

For example, the delicious imi-

tation fish with sweet and sour sauce is actually made of soybean protein. There is also Tea Aroma Duck, sea cucumber, braised pork chop, and even hamburger-style steak all made of pure soybean. Tai Ji Vegetarian Soup is made from a mixture of corn juice and spinach juice, with the green and yellow portions forming a *yin* and *yang* symbol.

The quantities of the dishes were quite big – each enough for three to four people. Illustrated photos make it fairly easy to work around the Chinese-only menu and still order well.

Cao Mu Jian

Where: 2/F Huateng Building, A302 Jinsong Sanqu, Chaoyang

Open: 11am-12pm

Tel: 8773 0135

Cost: 100 yuan per person. (Tea costs from 88-888 yuan)

Hunan fish head

Xiang Fei Hunan flavor restaurant (Erlizhuang Nanli, Haidian) is offering their special Hunan Flavored Fish Head for only 22 yuan per dish. For reservations, call 133 9161 8866.



Half-price pizzas

Menu items at Origus pizza restaurant (No 83 Xibahe Dongli, Chaoyang) are offered at half the original price this month. For reservations, call 6465 5007.



Hotpot discount

Visit Ga Pu Ga Pu hotpot restaurant (No 19 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang) after 8:30pm and enjoy every dish at half the standard price (beverages excluded). For reservations, call 6218 6060.



Free magnetic logo

Spend over 1,500 yuan on Henckels kitchen knives at Modern Plaza (No 130 Haidian Lu, Haidian) and get a free magnetic logo until December 31. For details, call 6257 6688.



Free ice cream

Dine at Qing You Zi Japanese hotpot restaurant (No 9 Fuchengmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng) for 68 yuan per person and get free ice cream. For details, call 5858 5588.



Reduced price shopping

Spend over 200 yuan at An Zhen Hua Lian Plaza (No 4 Anzhenli, Chaoyang) and get 60 yuan off your purchases until December 30. For details, call 6443 6880.



Free cabas

Spend over 888 yuan at Modern Plaza's ELLE counter (No 130 Haidian Lu, Haidian) and get a free cabas worth 398 yuan. For details, call 6257 6688.



Buy one take one meal

Order a set meal at Wei Bai Curry Snack (No 1 Dong Changan Jie, Dongcheng) and get another set meal free. For reservations, call 6882 3978.



Gift voucher for shopping

Spend over 200 yuan at Shuang An Plaza (No 38 Beisanhuan Xi Lu, Haidian) and get a gift voucher worth 80 yuan until January 3. For details, call 8214 8000.



Discount on jewelry

Gems at Bo Li De jewel store (No 3 Dawang Lu, Chaoyang) are currently 2-62 percent off. For details, call 8599 7501.



Household appliance discount

Selected Philips household appliances are 10 percent off at Lan Dao Plaza (No 8 Chaoyangmen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang) until December 31. For details, call 8561 7838.



Gift voucher for hotpot

Spend over 100 yuan at Hua Xiang Qi Macau hotpot restaurant (No 2 Jiangtai Lu, Chaoyang) and get a gift voucher worth 100 yuan. For reservations, call 5135 8117.



Meals 10 percent off

Dine at Shi Se Chun Shan restaurant (No 11 Building SOHU, Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang) and get 10 percent off your bill (excluding beverages) until December 31. For reservations, call 5869 9460.



Free dish

Spend over 1,000 yuan at Zuan Man Lou seafood restaurant (Wangjing Xi Lu, Beishihuan, Chaoyang) and get a special dish free until December 31. For reservations, call 6479 5657.



Gift voucher for bakery

Spend over 20 yuan on bread and cakes at Brothers Bakery (No 1 Dong Changan Jie, Dongcheng) and get a gift voucher worth 10 yuan until December 31. For details, call 8518 2931.



Clothing and shoe discount

Selected Sept Wolves clothes, shoes and sweaters at Jin Yuan Shopping Mall (No 1 Yuanda Lu, Haidian) are 75 percent off until December 31. For details, call 8887 0109.



Wedding photos

Pose for your wedding photos at Wei Wei studio (No 47 Xidan Bei Dajie, Xicheng) and enjoy a 35 percent discount until the end of the year. For details, call 6617 1775.



Half-price movie tickets

Watch a movie at Xing Mei Cineplex (No 1 Yuanda Lu, Jinyuan Yansha, Haidian) and pay only half the original ticket price until December 31. For details, call 8887 2741.



(By Terrence Lu)

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Metro life: tales of the five

By He Jianwei

"The apparition of these faces in the crowd; petals on a wet, black bough."

In penning those first lines, Ezra Pound found the charming complex between the city and the subway 'In a Station of the Metro' in Paris.

Subways have become part of metro life. Some people have even become addicted to them. To finish out 2006, *Beijing Today* introduces five stories about the subway to commemorate 2006's speeding away down the tunnel of time.

London

Annie Mole, a Londoner, has been running a blog about life in the 'Tube' since early 2003 (london-underground.blogspot.com).

We can't talk about the passion for subways without mentioning who has won the title of the World's Hottest Urban Blogger, and second place in World's Best Urban Blog in 2005, due in no small part to her Blogspot efforts.

Annie connected the blog with the subway, "I found the blog was a good way to update the news section as it gave me the flexibility to update from a number of places. I also felt I spent half my life underground, and originally I'd planned to make it a daily record of my commute. But I didn't want to bore people, I wanted them to see the funny side of the underground."

The Tube is a necessary evil in her eyes. "It's the fastest way for me to get into work, but at the same time, it has a lot of delays, it's overcrowded and expensive – and yet I can't live without it," she says.

For Annie, the subway is full of interesting stories. "I liked one time when I saw a man on the Tube who was walking a small ferret – which is like a weasel or a long rat. Not many people seemed to notice, and that's what I like about the Tube – you could be walking a lion underground and people would never notice it," she says.

"I think, in films, the red double-decker bus used to be the sign to show people were in London. This has changed so much – now, the London Underground Roundel, or logo, is used to represent London. If you see someone coming out of a Tube station, you think of busyness, expense, thousands of people, a frantic, cosmopolitan, but also a 'secret,' lifestyle that you can only really understand if you've lived there," she says.



Taipei

Zhan Ruijie, an engineer in Taipei. "We get together because we love the subway," Zhan Ruijie says, "Some like it because they can listen to the chinking sounds of the wheels and the track; some like it because the subway gives insight into others' lives."

Zhan believes people who love the subway and are concerned about its

issues can be called subway addicts. However, "The people who only care about whether the subway will be near their house, or whether their house will be demolished because of construction, don't qualify as addicts," he says.

For seven years, Zhan has been obsessed with subways. "The first time I rode the subway was the end of October, 1999. A new subway station had opened

near my home, and I took it to school. I am attending classes after having failed the college entrance examination, and the subway kept me company until I went to college," he says.

"Taipei's subway always accompanies my study and work here," he says. "It's exciting that more and more subways are being designed, built and opened to the public."

Shanghai

Guan Liangping, an IT manager and founder of ditiezu.com, created the BBS because of Volkswagen's advertisements.

"A series of Polo advertisements appeared in Shanghai's subway station this July that were condescending to subway-goers.

One said, you don't need to wear a suit if you have to squeeze into the subway everyday – unless you buy Polo cars," he says.

The advertisements touched off a round of hot debate; as a result, the campaign was abandoned a week later.

Guan believes it was necessary to provide a forum for subway

passengers. "The subway is a medium of communication. I'd like to think and observe on the train, and would like to listen to the swish as the train rocks to and fro while shuttling along," he says.

"Choosing the subway means choosing efficiency in Shanghai. You never have to worry about being late. Its passengers provide

a cross-section of society, and you can find frictions and romantics among the crowd," he says.

He is fond of the subway for two reasons: "I always go to work by subway, and I got used to it being my main mode of transportation. Maybe another reason is I love to play with model planes, cars and trucks."

Guangzhou

Liu Nian, a designer who left Beijing for Guangzhou this spring, has become a subway addict in his new home.

"I love the subway. I'm afraid I've been influenced by my father, because his childhood dream was to be a train conductor," he says. He has lived in Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen and Guangzhou. The more time he's spent in those cities, the deeper his love affair with the subway has grown.

"Professional subway addicts – they care about the different types of trains and various techniques used. But I'm afraid I'm not a professional addict, because I only care about surface things, such as the interior and exterior design of the trains," he says.

He had lived in Beijing for four years, but finds Beijing's subway system too clunky and inefficient.

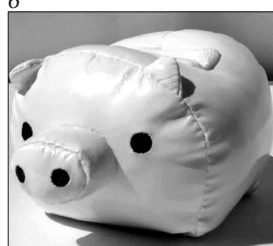
"I love Guangzhou's subway – it was designed with a human touch. Every stop has its own theme. The most satisfying feature of Guangzhou's subway is that all its trains are on time," he says.

He wants to collect pictures and articles about subways in different cities.



By Gan Tian

"Every little thing that you say and do, I'm hung up, hung up on you!" Madonna's hit song, "Hung Up," goes. I wonder whether this "you" could have been a piglet. The pig year is coming fast, and everyone, including you and me, need some decorations to oink it in.



Every little thing about piglets

1. Gangsta pig doll

That's one tough looking pig. Doesn't he remind you of movies like *The Godfather*, *Once upon a Time in America* or *American Gangster*? It's the leading actor - Mr Pig! Take him home and put him in your doorway to scare away those mice!

Available: F/5 Huawei Shopping Center, Xidan, Xicheng
Price: 40 yuan

2. Pig-head flowers

Many couples are planning to have a baby this year, since in Chinese tradition, babies born this year will enjoy happiness forever like piglets - well, at least till they're slaughtered and turned into sweet and sour pork. These would be great for a wedding ceremony or bridal shower. What I'm worried about is how fat they'll grow in the future ...

Available: B1-L-04, 77 Street, Xidan, Xicheng
Price: 150-300 yuan (varies by the number of pig-heads)

3. Pink pig clock

Even in the year of the pig you can't be too lazy. You still have to wake up to go to work each morning, and this clock is the best thing next to being splashed with a bucket of cold water. Besides, who wouldn't love the pig's round face and healthy color? Just don't start taking after his sleeping habits.

Available: Hello Shop, No 52 Xisi Bei Dajie, Xicheng
Price: 48 yuan

4. Piggy bank

If your earnings aren't enough to fill the trough or you're paying a bit too much hush money to the pigs, this can help make ends meet. But saving with a piggy bank will lead to heart-break. Even if you save a lot of money, you have to smash him apart to get any of it back. Sadly,

clay makes for bad bacon.

Available: Easyhome, No 65 Beisihuan Dong Road, Yayuncun, Chaoyang
Price: 18 yuan

5. Mobile phone holder

Stick this to your dashboard and drop in your phone so it can have a safe trip with you. My only concern is, how will the pig react to seeing Beijing traffic? Let me know if you've bought one.

Available: shop33876417.taobao.com
Price: 10 yuan

6. Black-white pig cotton slippers

Try them on and show off your "pig pride" in front of your mother. One foot is black and the other is white. Since they'll keep you from getting dirty in your bedroom, buying yourself a pair may be the best gift for her next year.

Available: B/1, 77 Street, Xidan, Xicheng
Price: 25 yuan

7. Ashtray

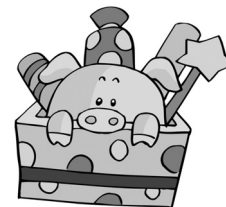
To smoke or not to smoke: that is the question. My roommate tried to quit many times; but after I sent him this ashtray, he made up his mind: he'll never quit. He loves to try torturing the red pig by shoving two lit cigarettes up its nose. Every night when I go home, I fear for my life.

Available: B/1, 77 Street, Xidan, Xicheng
Price: 20 yuan

8. The Many Adventures of Winnie The Pooh DVD

Am I out of mind? No, I know it is not the year of the bear, but the movie still has the bear's best buddy, Piglet. Disney, the king of sappy family flicks, makes a great movie your whole family can enjoy in the new year.

Available: F/4, Beijing Bookstore Building, Xidan, Xicheng
Price: 35 yuan



CFP Photo

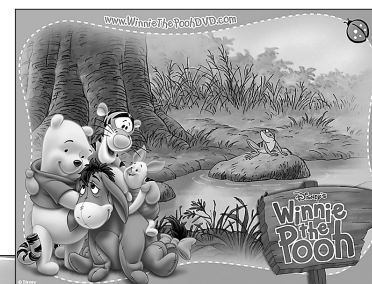
Tips for the Pig Year

Pig year is the last year of the twelve *shengxiao*, which means it will be a "full and satisfactory" year.

This year was a good year for marriage because next year is the "golden pig year." The year, which is said to come once every 60 years, is supposed to be the best for giving birth. Traditionally, babies born this year are thought to have a rich and comfortable future.

This year is a good time to give your Chinese friends baby clothes or maternity accessories. You may get quite a few gifts related to pigs yourself! Don't worry - they're just blessing you with good luck.

Pay close attention to your familial relationships this year. In the year of the pig it's critical to maintain a harmonious family environment.



8



2



3

If you want to show off your fashion store, have a great collection of fashion accessories and knick-knacks or just want to recommend the best places around town to find fun and flashy items, drop me a line at gantian@ynet.com or call 6590 2527.

Photos by Gan Tian



7

By Huang Daohen

It's winter again. Daylight is losing its battle to darkness, and the world turns to night before supper. However, winter's short days pose more dangers than cold and loneliness. High fever followed by longer sleep times and a few extra portions at the table can be trouble on your body when the temperature drops. However, there are more seasonal lows to watch out for than these symptoms, like Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of a depressive disorder.

Beating the winter blues

Things to be aware of

What is SAD?

SAD is a disorder in which sufferers show seasonal changes of mood and behavior. The most common mood change is depression, here referred to as "affective disorder." SAD can occur during any season, but it typically strikes people during the winter months, Yang Zhijie, a psychiatrist at the Peking University Third Hospital, says.

Who gets the blues?

Winter blues probably accounts for about one in three cases of depression. SAD sets in between ages 20-40 and hits women more often than it does men. However, men, children, adolescents, middle-aged and the elderly can do suffer from the seasonal downturn.

For about 30 percent of Beijingers, the normal winter woes get a little more noticeable and begin to affect their daily lives.

These people are suffering from what's called sub-syndromal SAD. About 5 percent of the population develops the nightmare of full-blown SAD, Yang says.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms are many and varied, Yang says even if your symptoms don't appear in the common SAD list, they still could be SAD if you feel they occur seasonally. People suffering from SAD commonly experience one or more of the following symptoms:

Mental

Depression, guilt, low self-esteem, loss of confidence, hopelessness, irritability (especially children), avoidance of human contact, anxiety, inability to tolerate stress and seasonal alcohol and drug abuse.

Physical

Fatigue, lethargy, debility, sleep prob-

lems, usually too much sleep and difficulty staying awake or waking up (especially children), sometimes insomnia or disturbed sleep and early morning wakening.

Causes

Doctors don't know the causes of SAD, but heredity, age and the body's own chemical makeup all seem to play a role. So can the availability of sunlight.

Researchers suspect reduced sunlight may disrupt the body's circadian rhythm that regulates internal functions. The rhythm says when it's time to sleep and time to wake up. This disruption may cause depression. Some scientists have theorized that melatonin, a sleep-related hormone linked to depression, might be the cause. Production of melatonin increases during the long nights of winter.

Treatments

Although there's no cure for the SAD, various treatments can help you manage the condition and make it through the winter.

Light therapy

Since the main cause of winter blues is a lack of sunlight, it stands to reason the main way of controlling the disorder is by light treatment, sometimes called phototherapy. Light treatment is usually better tolerated than medication, and there are few medical conditions that would make one unsuitable

for light treatment.

It's important to start having light treatment as soon as, ideally before, symptoms start – some people who wait until they are very ill find they get little to no relief. People who do not respond, especially if they try light treatment late in winter, would be well advised to try again early in the following winter.

Medication

If your symptoms are more than mild,

see your doctor and ask for an antidepressant. About 70 percent of people taking antidepressants have decreased symptoms, and about half experience remission while on medication.

Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy helps you identify and alter the negative thoughts and behaviors that may trigger symptoms of SAD. You and your psychiatrist or psychologist can talk about ways to reduce stress in your life.

Cures for the blues

Josh Odoner, counselor

In the last couple years, I've realized I get really down during winter. To keep my mood up, I focus on things I like about winter, like being able to put my car into anti-slip drive during snowstorms; playing ice hockey on the lake is great too; lighting up the fireplace and looking outside, and being glad I don't have a reason to be out there; sledding with my girlfriend. Stuff like that. Just focus on the good things about winter and stay warm.

Simon Zhang, student

I finally get over hating winter when I start doing all those organizational projects I've been putting off. Catalog your CDs or your MP3 library. Purge out your junk mail and do the file management tasks for your mail accounts.

Orga-

nize your tools. This is not necessarily a time to do "big" projects like building a laundry room, but do small tasks with big payoffs. Or, give yourself a challenge, such as "During January, I'm going to write a letter a day." Or read all the works of one author.

Jim Knave, blogger

I get mild winter blues. I find the keys to getting through it are exercise, sunlight, socializing and activities. I live in Madison, Wisconsin, 45 degrees north of the equator. It's getting dark now at 4:30 pm.

I try to go out for a walk during the day. If the sun comes out, I head outside for 30 minutes or so. I eat lunch at my desk and deal with email, and then use my lunch hour for a walk. I also bike to work.

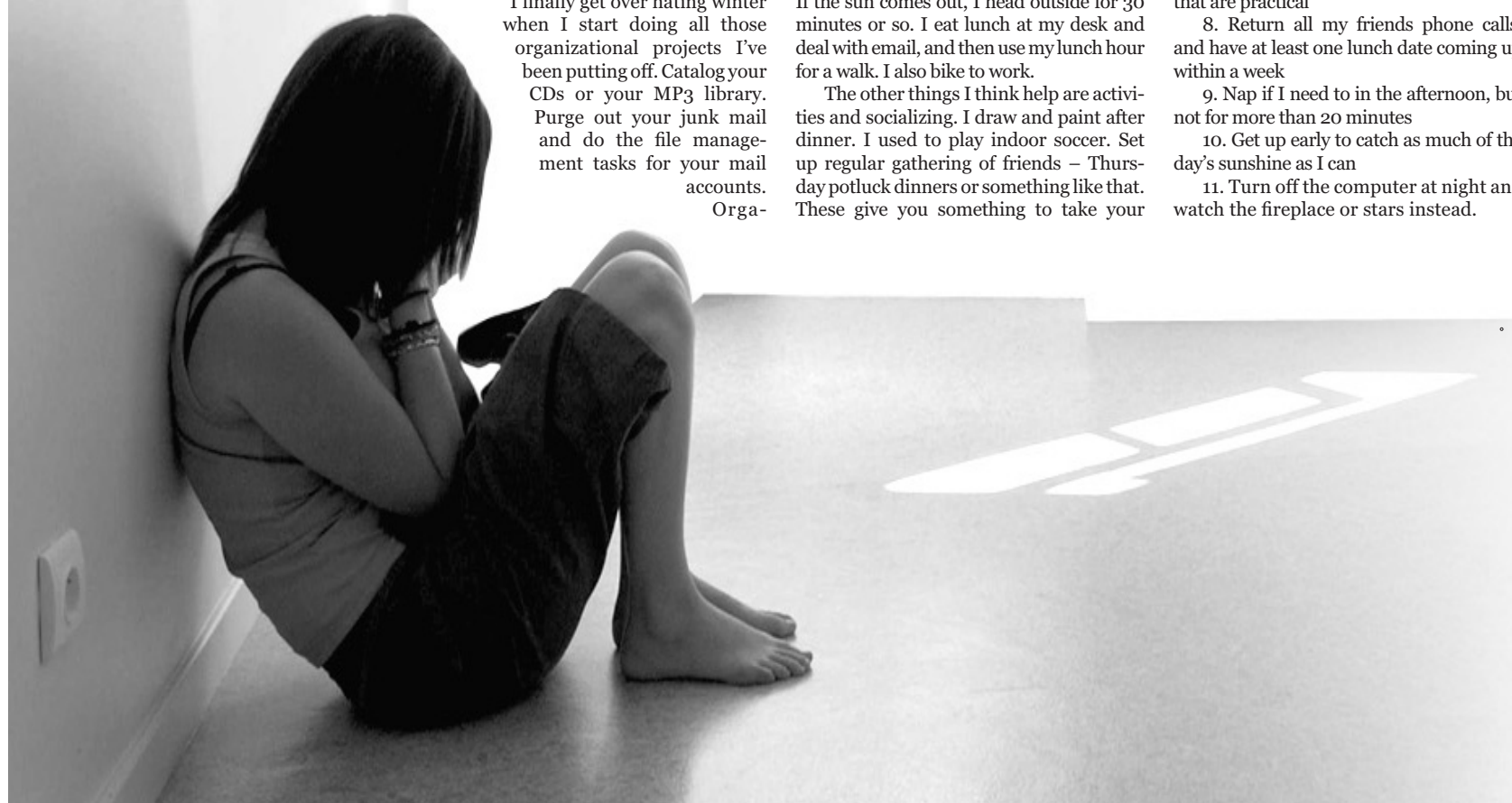
The other things I think help are activities and socializing. I draw and paint after dinner. I used to play indoor soccer. Set up regular gathering of friends – Thursday potluck dinners or something like that. These give you something to take your

mind off of it being dark and something positive to focus on.

Hou Guozi, teacher

There's no big secret to what I do; all of my "tricks" are just the normal day's routine. The key is maintaining it when the dark days set in.

1. Write in my journal
2. Dance or do yoga
3. Take a 15-minute walk
4. Pet furry animals
5. Brush and floss
6. Shower
7. Wear clothes I like instead of clothes that are practical
8. Return all my friends phone calls, and have at least one lunch date coming up within a week
9. Nap if I need to in the afternoon, but not for more than 20 minutes
10. Get up early to catch as much of the day's sunshine as I can
11. Turn off the computer at night and watch the fireplace or stars instead.



A campus to face the sea, with spring flowers blossoming

By Jiang Xubo

Whenever I hear this poem, I wonder if it's a tribute to the beauty of Xiamen University's campus, but I never bothered to confirm it. I just believe, from the bottom of my heart, it must be true. With the back of the campus facing Wulao Mountain and the front facing the sea, the campus is seated on a scenic port straight out of a poem.

After entering the main gate, you'll pass through a stone arch signaling you have entered the campus. The buildings are hidden amongst fame-trees, bengal trees and hairy bougainvillea, and the landscape is dotted with lake and hills.

Lovers' Valley

To fully appreciate the beauty of the Lovers' Valley, you'd better set out early in the morning. Walking along the flagstone road, which extends from the main gate, and turning for the road that goes over the hill at the first fork, where the Qinye Canteen is located, you will be on your way to the young lovers' secret garden hidden on the side of Wulao Mountain.

As you follow the winding cement path, your eyes will fall on a small lake a quarter-of-an-hour later. The lake, which is engulfed in thick forest, glitters like a huge emerald with thin mist floating above its surface. Only the chirping of small birds that flock there for bathing shatters the peaceful, dawn image.

Leaning against the cool rails, you can feel mist rising off the water, gently touching your face. You might feel like walking down the steps and taking a turn about the willow-framed path. If you draw near the water, you can feel the love of the young birds that ramble about Lovers' Path.

You could also try a brief hike in the forested Wulao Mountain. Foresting a trail through the woods, thicket and vines with several friends can be quite a pleasant experience – but make sure you don't get lost.

The Lotus Lake

Return to the fork that took you to Lovers' Valley and head down the other path to Furong (lotus) lake. Walk along the main path and turn right when you come across a huge bengal tree. After walking through the tangled tree roots you'll arrive at the heart of the campus. The lake is always rippling in the cool breeze, no matter a somber, cloudy day or shinny, sunny day.



Jiannan Grand Hall



The beach

The lake is still water, but that doesn't detract from its pristine beauty. Several herons often flap across the lake and perch on the huge, light brown rock in the middle. The other ripples come courtesy of fishes swimming between the weeds near the bank. If you are lucky enough, you can catch a glimpse of tortoises in the summer afternoons, paddling elegantly through the dark green water.

Walking along the zigzagged flagstone path, you can sit down for a rest on a wooden bench where you'll be shaded by tall palm trees. You can even stretch out on the soft lawn. On warm afternoons, you can lie down and nap, arms beneath your head, with the sun sifting through branches above. Students sit here and there by twos and threes, reading or just taking a rest.

If you keep walking along the lake, you'll find yourself at a spacious plaza after several minutes. It's a building group of five skyscrapers. The buildings, which were built at the start of this century, now stand as the university's landmark with their combination of western-style bodies and traditional Fujian-style roofs.

Standing at the square in front of the buildings and staring across the lake, you can catch a pic-

turesque view of the campus. Beyond the lake is the Furong dormitory, a dark-red-bricked building built in traditional style. The dorm is positioned in the middle of the woods, and the corners of its roofs stick out between the trees.

In the warm spring dusk, the lake literally sparkles in the sunset. The tree blossoms appear like flames and light up the whole campus. Following the lingering ring of the bell, light music plays on the campus radio with the end of another day. The end of the last class is the most beautiful and dynamic moment.

The beach

Walking along the lake and turning down the main path, you end up at Sanjiacun, a crossroad where two walls stand as the campus main billboards. Partygoers and people watchers take note: you can always find posters for weekend balls and performances here. Following the road up the hill, you'll exit the campus's Baicheng gate. After crossing a rainbow-like overpass, you will literally have a beach to yourself.

The beach, which lies between Huli Mountain and Yanwu Bridge, may be one of the most popular beaches on the city's Huandao Road, a scenic ring road that follows the coastline. Seated on the soft sand under the palm trees, eyes full of seaside sunset and ears full of gentle waves tossing onto the sand, you can find inner peace. Kick away your shoes, roll up your trousers and stroll along the beach to feel the soft sand with your feet; you can even strip down and take a plunge. The water stays quite warm, even in winter, thanks to the seaside city's pleasant oceanic climate. The thermometer hovers around 10 C even on the coldest days of the year.

The Yanwu Bridge doesn't present its beauty until nightfall. When the clear, bright lights that outline the body of the bridge kick on, it's like the bridge turns into an invisible walkway through the blackness. Walking along the bridge in the cool, evening breeze and inhaling the briny, sea air, it's as if you've been transported into a fairytale scene.

The Jiannan Grand Hall

The hall stands amidst a group of five buildings, which lie in a light pitch arc on a slope facing the sea. A stadium with a grandstand of over 40 rows at the foot of the slope, in front of the buildings, makes them seem even more magnificent.

Transportation

Flights from Beijing Capital International Airport to Xiamen Gaoqi International Airport, nine times daily (two hours and 40 minutes, 1,860 yuan).

Xiamen University is one of the hubs for the city's public transportation. It's cheap and convenient to get to almost all the city's tourist attractions.

Accommodation

The service center for Overseas Education College (Caiqingjie Building) in the campus is popular for its pocket-saving prices (single room is 180 yuan; double is 200 yuan; triple is 240 yuan; suite with two doubles is 300 yuan), but you'd better make reservations at least two weeks in advance. Call the service center at 059 2218 0501.

Campus cuisine

You can have a standard meal at the Dongyuan Canteen or Shijing Canteen for several yuan, but you have to buy meal tickets first. You can also try local food on the third floor of the No 3 Furong Building. The *hailijian* (fried oyster), *bianshi* (local wontons) and *putian lumian* (boiled noodle) are all worth trying.



The Lotus Lake

Photos by Ru Boshu

The Underground River's main entrance and exit



Puerto Princesa – Heart of the Last Paradise



The island of Palawan

By Tiffany Tan

If you're trapped in a city like Beijing where winter seems to last for half the year, the ultimate fantasy is to escape to the tropics where summer can last the whole year; where your wardrobe is mainly composed of cotton shorts and T-shirts, and where you can sunbathe from January through December.

If you're looking for a tropical island getaway, then the Philippines may be just your thing. Less than five hours away on a direct flight from Beijing, the country is made up of 7,107 islands and is renowned for its white sand beaches, coral reefs and dive sites. Despite its natural wonders, the Philippines, in recent years, has received a lot of negative press as a tourist destination because of occurrences of kidnapping, bombing and local insurgency. However, foreigners who have visited the islands themselves say these incidents only take place in isolated areas. Generally, the Filipinos are friendly and hospitable, and quick to laugh and smile.

The Last Paradise

Dubbed the "The Philippines' Last Frontier," the island-province of Palawan is one of the country's top destinations for local and international tourists. It offers everything from wreck diving to mountain climbing; from archaeological artifacts to five-star resorts; from an African wildlife sanctuary to Spanish-era churches.

Comprised of over a thousand islands and islets and covering an area of 1.5 million hectares, the province is better explored at a leisurely

pace. If you're on limited time or don't know where to begin, Palawan's capital city of Puerto Princesa is ideal: it's a microcosm of the province's many attractions, plus it's an information base for those wishing to embark on a longer expedition.

Port of the Princess

Legend attributes the name "Puerto Princesa" to a princess-like maiden who roamed the place on certain nights of the year, reads the city government website. "On the other hand, practical people attribute the name to the geographical advantages of the place as a seaport – naturally protected (from the elements) the whole year round and endowed with a depth that can accommodate any size of shipping – a heaven for vessels or a virtual princess of ports as thus indicated by Spanish colonizers on the country's map."

Today, Puerto Princesa is a bustling city – shopping complexes, banks, handicraft stores, hotels and fast food chains have mushroomed all around, but it sadly means traffic has become a perennial problem. Despite this, Puerto remains a royalty among tourist destinations, particularly for its Underground River, island hopping adventure and wildlife conservation center.

River under the mountain

The St Paul Subterranean National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which boasts of a tropical rainforest and birds endemic to the province. Its main attraction is an 8.2km river, known to locals as the Underground River, which runs through a cavity underneath rocky mountains, before flowing directly into the sea. Reputed to be the longest of its kind in the world, the river is navigable through paddle boats manned by officially appointed boatmen cum tour guides.

Once you enter the cave, you'd be shrouded in darkness beyond the boatman's lone lamp – some-

thing that might make claustrophobics think twice about going. The temperature inside is a noticeable few degrees lower than the outside, but this should be a welcome relief on humid days. The hour-long ride is perfectly safe, since each passenger is provided with a life vest. The boatmen also undergo special training, which includes being left inside the cave treading water until colleagues finally come to fetch them.

What you will see during the 1km tour is nothing short of amazing: stalactites and stalagmites that look like fruits, animals and religious images and gigantic rock formations that resemble a cathedral and a domed amphitheater. The cave, by the way, is home to bats,

beaches, and features shallow coral reefs. It has become a favorite destination for swimming, snorkeling and diving, the wowphilippines.ph travel site reads.

These islets include Luli Island, which is only visible during low tide; Bat Island, a bat sanctuary which doesn't allow visitors; Starfish Island, named after the starfish scattered all around it; Snake Island, a long stretch of fine white sand shaped like a snake; Senorita Island, a breeding ground for grouper fish, locally called lapulapu; and Dos Palmas, a high-class beach resort, which shot to fame when a group of rebels stormed the place in 2001. Some of the islands require an entrance and cottage fee; others are

Crocodile farm

Still referred to by locals as the Crocodile Farm, the now Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center, was jointly established by the Philippine and Japanese governments in 1987 to stem the decline of two species of Philippine crocodiles.

Although the center has already succeeded in its original goal, its main focus continues to be the study and preservation of crocodiles. Visitors flock to the place to pet baby crocodiles and to see



From left to right: Palawan Bear Cat, Sunset in Honda Bay, Crocodile Farm inhabitant, Puerto Princesa Cathedral

so you'll see them either resting or flying around. They're nothing to worry about – as long as they don't hit you with their droppings.

Getting there:

The park is located in Barangay Bahile, Puerto Princesa, 81km from the city proper. From the city center, take a jeepney to Sabang through Barangay Cabayugan (1.5 hrs), then transfer to a pumpboat (10-15 mins) to get to the river entrance. Alternatively, you can hike from Sabang to the river entrance via a monkey trail (1.5 hrs).

Islets of fun

Honda Bay is the best way to enjoy the sea, sand and sun without needing to travel far from the city proper. The bay consists of a number of islets bordered by white sand

privately owned, thus, prior permission from the owner is necessary.

Most tourists hire a pumpboat at the wharf and spend the day "island hopping." You'll need a full day for this outing and even then, you'll return home exhausted, but with a wide grin on your face. You can also choose to stay overnight out in the bay, since some islands offer overnight accommodations.

Getting there:

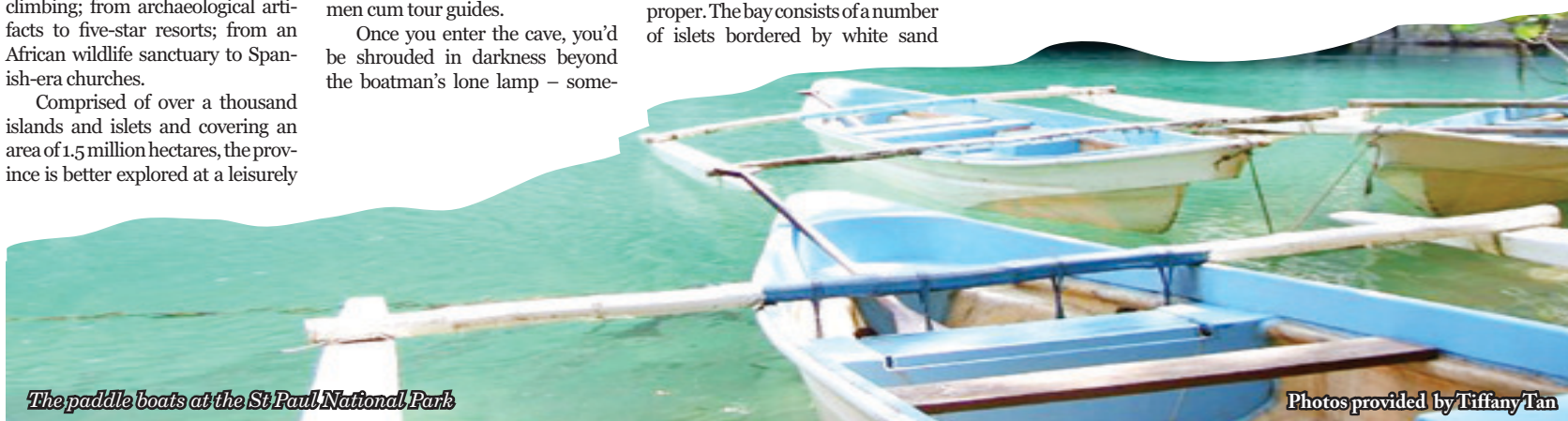
The bay is located in Barangay Sta Lourdes, Puerto Princesa, 12km from the city center. The Sta Lourdes wharf is about 30min away by tricycle, car or jeepney. From the wharf, a pumpboat ride to the islets can take anywhere from 15-50 mins.

the adult in their pens. The place houses a "hospital" for sick and disabled crocodiles and also showcases the skin and bones of the largest saltwater crocodile ever captured in the country, which measures 17 feet and 6 inches.

At the same time, the center maintains a mini-zoo featuring some of Palawan's endemic and endangered animals. The animals are fed every Monday and Thursday afternoon, and visitors may come to see this.

Getting there:

The center is located along the National Road, Barangay Irawan, Puerto Princesa, 30-40 mins from the city proper.



The paddle boats at the St Paul National Park

Photos provided by Tiffany Tan

The Worksoft cornerstone: Perseverance and creative solutions

By Han Manman

Worksoft Creative Software Technology, Ltd is the leading China-based provider of IT business software services to North American and European global firms. It delivers IT solutions to clients worldwide, helping maximize their return on investment.

"We have a rather uncommon way of selecting interns: we establish tie-ups with universities, then send them our engineers to conduct IT training. During the training, we keep an eye out for students who stand out. We also have a more conventional

procedure: we hold an interview and test followed by a training workshop. Although we're an IT company, the interview is less concerned with the person's IT knowledge than it is with his or her problem solving skills and attitude. Students who pass the interview will go on to receive training from us. Those who make it through the training will be given an internship in a suitable department. The person's internship performance will decide whether he or she will eventually be offered a job."

— Kevin, HR manager of Worksoft



Wang Zhenyu graduated from Northeastern University this year with a major in information technology and business management. He started his internship in January and in October got a full-time offer as customer relations management (CRM) consultant.

Last winter was an unforgettable period; like many other graduates, my life revolved around exams and job hunting. I didn't have a clue for what kind of career I wanted or even what industry would suit me, so I went to every campus recruitment talk and job fair I could find. I sent out my resume to as many companies as possible, without considering what they did. At that time, I was only concerned with having a place to work and not becoming a bum. Once companies began getting in touch with me, I became calmer. I knew that I needed to have focus, so I wrote down what industries and companies interested me and employers' various hiring requirements, based on the campus recruitment talks. From then on, I was no longer blindly job hunting, rather, I had clear goals in mind.

This January, just as I finished my final examinations, I received a training notice from Worksoft. The envy of a lot of classmates, I went to their Wuhan training base. I thought the training would be conducted like a class, where teachers would introduce us to the latest information technology. To my surprise, the company wanted us

to do independent study. During the day, I needed to read documents and develop a program especially designed for us by Worksoft engineers. At night, I had to bear the wet and gloomy winter, which didn't give me much sleep.

At the beginning, I felt like withdrawing from the program, thinking about my classmates who were at home enjoying the winter vacation. According to our training manager, my attitude was very common for fresh graduates and encouraged me to keep on going. I finally got my act together; I was always first to finish the programming tasks assigned to us and a few days later, became a team leader. I completed the three-month training in a month and was selected to go to the Beijing headquarters.

In Beijing, I worked on my projects until midnight everyday. As I got to know the industry better, I found out that I was more interested in the business aspect than the computer programming side. I told my boss about this, who was very open-minded. He recommended me for another interview and I eventually fulfilled my dream of becoming part of the CRM team.

Comments from Kevin: I was impressed with Wang's logical thinking. He can always clearly describe his future plans and path for personal development, unlike other graduates who have no idea what they want. We felt he was dependable and always seriously considered his suggestions. He said that he wanted to work in CRM and we supported that. Putting a person in a suitable work position is a win-win situation both for the employee and the company.

As an IT service company, our capital and source of profit are our engineers. As such, the HR department plays a significant role. In addition, Beijing is the country headquarters, so we're overseeing up to 2,400 staff members. I'm responsible for personnel relations and training.

The biggest challenge, so far, has been dealing with labor disputes. When an employee's unhappy with the company, the person always complains about a lot of things. When this happens, what I need to do is analyze the cause of discontent and think of ways to proactively

solve the problem. It may sound easy, but it's hard to do. Knowing labor-related laws is essential, said my boss. To become more competent in the field, right now, I'm preparing for the National Human Resources Management Expert Examination.

During my internship, I encountered some difficulties. At that time, the HR department underwent a big structural adjustment; my responsibilities, including my boss, were changed. The new boss brought in a new working style, so the entire team's work methods had to be modified too. At first, I couldn't fit into the new way of doing things and I couldn't understand it, no matter how hard I tried. Then, my boss had a talk with me and said that each person has his or her own working style — no one's automatically right or wrong. Even she had to make adjustments to the new work situation. She said that this would be a good learning experience for a fresh graduate like me. Her advice helped me understand other people better and maintain an open mind.



Wu Di graduated from China Agricultural University with a major in international business English. Wu began her internship in February and seven months later, got a full-time offer from the HR department.

I've always had creative inclinations and wanted to become an outstanding programmer. When I first heard about Worksoft, I had little knowledge about the software outsourcing industry. I only knew that outsourcing companies had fewer self-made products, yet came into frequent contact with big-name global products. Worksoft said the salary they offered was based on a person's ability not educational background. This impressed me, so I handed in my resume.

After the intern interview, I was sent to Wuhan for training. Under great pressure, I utilized every minute to learn as much as I could. In English class, I took every opportunity to improve my speaking skills and to boost

my confidence communicating in English. In technology class, I worked hard to understand the material and read subject-related books at night.

In Beijing, an American conducted my second-round interview to qualify for our TIBCO China Development Center (TIBCO is a world leader in business integration and process management software). Unfortunately, because of nerves, the interview didn't go well. I was dejected, but luckily, the training department arranged for me to undergo the TIBCO CDC training together with others who also failed the second interview.

I threw myself into the training and thought about many ways to solve a problem and explained to my teacher each solution's advantages over the others. This caught my teacher and the TIBCO CDC management's attention. A few days later, I was recommended for an interview for a new TIBCO CDC position. This time around, I spoke with self-confidence and got the job.



Song Bihao graduated from Central South University with a major in information security. Song started his internship in April and got a full-time offer after he graduation.

Comments from Kevin: Song's technical know-how sets him apart from other graduates. Plus, he did very well in school. If there are two kinds of students we don't like, one of them is a show-off; someone who keeps on talking during meetings even if he or she has nothing important to say. The other is someone who pretends to understand everything you say. The person nods when you give instructions, even though he or she has no idea how to do the work you assigned. Song, on the other hand, thinks first before speaking. Sometimes he says very little, but his words carry a lot of weight. We need people like that.

Greetings for the New Year



By Liu Yongli

Good luck, good health, good cheer. I wish you a happy New Year.

祝好运、健康、佳肴伴你度过一个快乐新年。

With best wishes, have a happy New Year!

祝新年快乐，并致以良好的祝福。

I hope you have a most happy and prosperous New Year.

谨祝新年快乐幸福，大吉大利。

With the compliments of the season.

祝贺佳节。

May the season's joy fill you all year round.

愿节日的愉快伴你一生。

Season's greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

祝福您，新年快乐。

Please accept my season's greetings.

请接受我节日的祝贺。

Wish you joy in this holy season. May lasting happiness be with you.

恭祝新年吉祥，幸福和欢乐与你同在。

Good health, good luck and much happiness throughout the year.

恭祝健康、幸运，新年快乐。

May you find joy and happiness around you today and always.

愿快乐幸福永伴你左右。

Please accept my sincere wishes for the New Year. I hope you will continue to enjoy good health.

请接受我诚挚的新年祝福，顺祝身体健康。

Allow me to congratulate you on the arrival of the New Year and to extend to you all my best wishes for your perfect health and lasting prosperity.

恭贺新禧，祝身体健康、事业发达。

Best wishes for the holidays and happiness throughout the New Year.

恭贺新禧，万事如意。

With very best wishes for your happiness in the

New Year.

致以最良好的祝福，愿您新年快乐幸福。

Please accept our wishes for you and your family for a happy New Year.

请接受我们对你及你全家的美好祝福，祝你们新年快乐。

May the coming New Year bring you joy, love and peace.

愿新年为你带来快乐，友爱和宁静。

Season's greetings and sincere wishes for a bright and happy New Year!

献上节日的问候与祝福，愿你拥有一个充满生机和欢乐的新年。

I give you endless brand-new good wishes. Please accept them as a remembrance of our lasting friendship.

给你我无尽的新的祝福，让它们成为我们永恒友谊的新的纪念。

Good luck and great success in the coming New Year.

祝来年好运，并取得更大的成就。

On the occasion of the New Year, my wife and I extend to you our warmest greetings, wishing you a happy New Year, greater success in your career and happiness at home.

在此新年之际，我同夫人向你及你的家人致以节日的问候，并祝你们新年快乐、事业有成、家庭幸福。

May everything beautiful and best be condensed into this card. I sincerely wish you happiness, cheerfulness and success.

愿一切最美好的祝福都能用这张贺卡表达，真诚地祝你幸福、快乐、成功！

Liu Yongli is a teacher at Beijing International Studies University.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify chinglish in public areas. If you see any chinglish signs, please take a picture and send them to Shirley_chen@ynet.com with your name and address.

"Enterness"

By Derrick Sobodash

When I taught an English composition class, I said to my students again and again, "Write short; write concise; every word that doesn't strengthen a sentence weakens it."

"Enterness" followed my instructions, and then threw all



grammar rules out the window.

The word has a very nice sound, and in some ways, I wish it were an English word. It's certainly easier on the ears than "nucular." The key problem is the -ness suffix is used to create nouns from adjectives; "happy" turns into happiness, "tidy" begets tidiness and for-

getful ... I forget.

What this sign is searching for is a word suffix which can create nouns from verbs. In English, there are several suffixes for this: -ment, -tion/sion and -ance/ence. "Enterment" looks like someone misspelled "entertainment," and "entertion" isn't much better. The winner appears to be "entrance" – likely because it's a real noun, and precisely what this sign should have said.

Goods Return

By Derrick Sobodash

I was excited when I saw this picture. I thought this was the counter I – and half the world

– have seen only in our dreams: the counter of lost goods.

Remember those 500 balloons, 387 ballpoint pens, 73 plastic army men, 400 paper clips and US\$5 bill your dad punished you for losing when you were a boy? Here they are – all of them.


Yes, this is where all those goods you dared not hope to see




again come spiriting back from their hiding places at the end of the universe. I spent the last 20 years wondering where my stuffed cat and turtle went after they fell out of a van in California. While I may never know where they were, at least I can finally get them back!

Then I read the Chinese ...


Sadly, this line is as far from my fantasy as one can get. It's just a line for returning those low-quality products you only bought to make that saleswoman stop chasing you. Please change the sign for this counter to the more universally understood "Returns" before it shatters more customers' fantasies.




GOOSE "N" DUCK
HOLIDAY PARTIES!
COMPANY OR OFFICE
PARTIES BOOK NOW!




CHAO YANG
PARK WEST
65381691
SALES OFFICE



XMAS



NEW YEAR



SPRING FESTIVAL

Friday, December 29

Exhibition

Ji Xiaoping Solo Exhibition



Where: Themis Gallery, 2/F
Beijing Kaixuan Building, A143
Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng
When: Daily 10am-6pm,
until January 7
Admission: Free
Tel: 6465 6424;
8801 6525 ext 880

Movie

Amelie

Bursting with imagination and having seen her share of tragedy and fantasy, Amelie is not like other girls. As a waitress in a Montmartre bar, Amelie

enjoys simple pleasures until she discovers that her mission in life is to help others.

Where: French Culture Center, 18 Guangcai International Apartments, Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang
When: 8pm
Admission: 10-20 yuan
Tel: 6553 2627

Outdoor

Forbidden City and Tiananmen Square

The three-and-a-half-hour guided walk will provide a rich background on the Forbidden City, covering its history, architecture, fengshui, rituals and daily imperial life.

When: Meet at the first floor of KFC (next to the Lao She Teahouse), southwest of Tiananmen Square, 9:30am and return at 1pm.
Cost: 150 yuan
Tel: 6432 9341; 6432 1041
(Chinese Culture Club)

Saturday, December 30

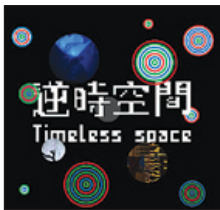
Exhibition

Frontal Attack and Backbite – Liu Yuan Solo Exhibition



Where: China Art Seasons, No 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang
When: Tue-Sun 10:30am-6:30pm, until February 16
Admission: Free
Tel: 6431 1900

Timeless Space – Lin Junt-ing Solo Exhibition



Where: Dimensions Art Center, No 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang

When: Tue-Sun 11am-7pm, until March 4
Admission: Free
Tel: 6435 9665

Movie

Goodbye, Lenin!

October 1989 was a bad time to fall into a coma if you lived in East Germany - and this is precisely what happened to Alex's proudly socialist mother. Her heart is so weak that any shock might kill her. To save his mother, Alex transforms the family apartment into an island of the past, a kind of socialist-era museum.

Where: French Culture Center, 18 Guangcai International Apartments, Gongti Xi Lu, Chaoyang
When: 8pm
Admission: 10-20 yuan
Tel: 6553 2627

Outdoor

Yunnan trip: Xishuangbanna and Lijiang

This will be an intensive five-day trip to tropical Xishuangbanna at the southern end

of Yunnan and the province's northwestern ancient town of Lijiang.

When: Take flight MU5712 from Beijing to Kunming at 7:50am on December 30 and return to Beijing via flight MU5711 at 6pm on January 3.
Cost: 6,250 yuan
Tel: 6432 9341, 6432 1041
(Chinese Culture Club)



Sunday, December 31

Exhibition

Absorption – He Zubin Solo Exhibition



Where: New Millennium Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, No 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang
When: Daily 10am-6pm, until January 26
Admission: Free
Tel: 6432 4122

Lim Yuong-Kyun Solo Exhibition



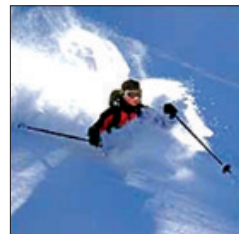
Where: 798 Space, Dashanzi Art District, No 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang
When: Daily 10:30am-midnight, until January 10
Admission: Free
Tel: 6438 4862; 6437 6248

Outdoor Skiing at Nanshan Ski Resort

Hop on our van heading for Miyun county's Nanshan Ski Resort, located about 80km from downtown Beijing. The resort boasts 12 trails for beginners, intermediate and advanced skiers and the Nokia Nanshan Mellow Park, which was designed and built by Mellow Construction Austria. You'll also find China's first Mogul's advanced trail, the Cable Hang-glider amusement

ride and snow sledges from Canada.

When: Meet at 8am at the Worker Stadium's west gate and return at 6pm.
Cost: 350 yuan
Tel: 139 1188 6524



Stage in January 2007

Music

2007 Beijing New Year Concert

Who: Beijing Symphony Orchestra
Where: Zhongshan Music Hall, inside Zhongshan Park, Dongcheng

When: 7:30pm, January 1
Admission: 80-880 yuan

Vanderbilt Symphony Orchestra

Who: Vanderbilt Symphony Orchestra (US)
Where: Great Hall of the People, on the west side of Tiananmen Square, Xicheng
When: 7:30pm, January 1
Admission: 80-1,180 yuan

Classical Chorus

Who: SK Chorus (Germany)
Where: Beijing Concert Hall, No 1 Beixinhua Jie, Xicheng
When: 7:30pm, January 5-6
Admission: 80-680 yuan

China Symphony Orchestra 2006-2007 Season

Who: China Philharmonic Orchestra
Where: Beijing Concert Hall, No 1 Beixinhua Jie, Xicheng
When: 7:30pm, January 13
Admission: 30-280 yuan

Richard Strauss Works

Who: China Philharmonic Orchestra
Where: Poly Theater, No 14 Dongzhimen Nan Lu, Dongcheng
When: 7:30pm, January 21
Admission: 50-680 yuan

Dance

Swan Lake

Who: Russian Samara State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, No 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng
When: 7:30pm, January 1-2
Admission: 120-880 yuan

New Year Ballet Concert

Who: National Ballet of China
Where: Beijing University Concert Hall, inside Beijing University, Haidian
When: 7:30pm, January 1-2
Admission: 150-380 yuan

Thousand-armed Guanyin

Who: China Disabled People's Performing Art Troupe
Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, No 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng

When: 7:30pm, January 24-25
Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Little Birch Tree Dance Troupe

Who: Little Birch Tree Dance Troupe (Russia)
Where: Poly Theater, No 14 Dongzhimen Nan Lu, Dongcheng
When: 7:30pm, January 28-31
Admission: 120-880 yuan

(By Qiu Jiaoning)